

A STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION  
BETWEEN SCHOOL VIOLENCE AND SELECTED INDEPENDENT  
VARIABLES IN A SAMPLE OF ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND  
HIGH SCHOOLS IN A LARGE URBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT

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## ABSTRACT

### EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP

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A STUDY OF TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE ASSOCIATION  
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The specific problem this research studied is teachers' perceptions of factors that are associated with school violence in selected elementary, middle, and high schools in a large urban school district. Seven independent factors were selected for this study. They are: presence of security guards, presence of metal detectors, presence of gangs, mass media, family composition, student socioeconomic status, and antiviolence programs.

The purpose of this study was to examine teachers' perceptions of the association between school violence and selected independent variables in a large urban school district. Using a random sampling technique, a sample of 624 teachers were selected from eight elementary, two middle, and two high schools in the Atlanta Public Schools system. A single questionnaire was developed to gather data for this study.

Data collected were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The descriptive demographic variables of gender, age, race, school type, and years of experience were used to describe the data gathered. The dependent and independent variables were subjected to inferential statistics using the analysis of variance (ANOVA). Seven hypotheses were tested to determine the statistically significant association between the seven independent variables and the dependent variable. The level of significance used was .05.

The primary findings indicated that there was a statistically significant association between four of the independent variables: student socioeconomic status, family composition, antiviolence programs, and presence of security guards. Therefore, it could be concluded that teachers perceive external factors over which the student has no control are associated with violence in schools. Five main recommendations were made to school administrators, teachers, students, and the community.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

For more than two decades, classroom discipline has been a continuing concern of both educators and the public, and not without reason (Bauer 1985). For teachers, discipline problems and violent acts pose serious threats to their ability to do their jobs effectively and are a source of stress, a shadow over their public image, and, more frequently than we would like to think, a source of fear (Baker 1980). For students and parents, concerns range from the loss of opportunity for student achievement, thereby retarding academic and personal growth, to the risk of simple physical harm (Moles 1987).

According to the National School Safety Center report: (1) One in seven students is affected by bullying, (2) one in twelve students has stayed home from school out of fear of being hurt in school, (3) one in five students has feared being attacked going to or from school, and (4) one in eleven students has reported being a victim of a crime at school (Makesich 1994).

The U.S. Justice Department report of 1993 cited statistics that are as alarming as the statistics reported

by the National School Safety Center. The report stated that: (1) Nearly three million thefts and violent crimes occur on or near school campuses every year--one every six seconds; (2) 15 percent of students questioned say their school has gangs, while 16 percent claim a student has attacked or threatened a teacher at school; and (3) nearly 20 percent of all students in Grades 9-12 report they have carried a weapon at least once.

These statistics may seem startling, but students report that violence and the threat of violent acts occur constantly at school. Some administrators and teachers believe that schools are safe, but the reports of school violence prove otherwise.

At an inner-city Los Angeles high school, a group of students was asked to discuss school violence and specifically was asked if there were any guns on their campus that day. Several students answered in the affirmative. When asked if they could obtain a gun in the next thirty minutes, their questions were "How much money do you have?", "Do you want a plastic gun?", and "Do you want Teflon-tipped bullets?" (Moyers 1995).

Such frank discussion of the easy availability of guns and other weapons on school campuses increasingly has drawn national attention to school safety. In five major national newspapers (the Los Angeles Times, the New York Times, the Washington Post, the Wall Street Journal, and the

Christian Science Monitor), for example, 49.5 percent of all the news articles published between 1982 and 1993 that contained the key words "school violence" were published in 1992 and 1993 (Furlong 1994). Therefore, it can be concluded that school violence increased sharply during those years.

This media attention has contributed to increased concern among the general public and educators. Gorski and Pilotto (1993) called violence a "national epidemic," and no one is spared the consequences of its evil.

The nation's teachers are understandably concerned. Violence against teachers has increased dramatically in recent years. In the past, a teacher's only worry was effectively planning for his or her daily instruction, but recently a teacher's worry has evolved into a fear of being victimized during the school day.

Every month in America, more than 13,000 teachers are victimized by robbery or theft, and 5,200 teachers are attacked. Some of the attacks are vicious enough to generate newspaper headlines such as these: "A Third Grader Tore Several Ligaments in His Teacher's Thumb," "A High School Student Bit Off His Teacher's Ear," and "A Group of Students, Angered by Grades on a Test, Ganged Up on Their Teacher and Set Her Hair Afire" (Wagner 1993). In Georgia, a student put LSD in his teacher's tea while she lectured the class.

The fear that has gripped teachers has placed an increased burden on administrators. They are faced with the problems of providing a safe and secure learning and teaching environment for students and teachers.

For administrators, continual discipline problems imperil organizational stability and consume time and resources needed for the facilitation of quality instruction (Purkey 1985). Poorly disciplined schools drain the energies of both adults and students away from the central educational mission of teaching and learning.

#### Purpose of the Study

This study examined teachers' perceptions of the relationship between school violence and selected independent variables. Specifically, the independent variables studied were: the presence of security guards, the presence of metal detectors, the presence of gangs, the mass media, the composition of families, student socioeconomic status, and antiviolence programs.

Faced with the worrisome problem of school violence, administrators, teachers, parents and community leaders look for solutions like hiring additional security guards or installing metal detectors. Bushweller (1993) stated that security guards and metal detectors are useful, especially in inner-city schools where invading predators from surrounding neighborhoods are a major source of violence.

However, dealing with students as sources of everyday school violence requires more effective control from administrators, teachers, parents and the community at large.

According to Hardy (1991), teachers and administrators, not security guards, already prevent violence in most high schools. They do it by expressing approval of some behaviors and disapproval of other behaviors. This is tremendously effective in schools where the majority of students care about what teachers and administrators think of them. Baker (1991) stated that the problem is how to empower teachers, administrators, and students in schools where they are not intimidated by students who are not as receptive to education as we would like them to be.

### Background of the Problem

School violence is a problem that is present in schools all over America. Administrators, teachers, and students are challenged with violent situations constantly.

Newspapers across the country have been saturated with acts of violence that have occurred in schools. For example, in Columbus, Ohio, a teacher tutored a student for half an hour. The teacher was pleased with the student's progress, and the student seemed happy and eager to learn. Minutes later, that same student walked into another classroom and pulled a gun on a group of classmates who had been teasing her (Moyers 1995).

In affluent Fayette County, Kentucky, an annual security report of area elementary, middle, and high schools cited fourteen charges against students for carrying concealed weapons. The weapons found were a .38 caliber pistol, a .22 caliber Beretta, and a .38 Derringer (Merina 1994).

In East Baton Rouge, Louisiana, the number of incidents involving weapons rose 77 percent in 1993, prompting alarmed educators to mobilize the entire community around the issue of violence. The school board held meetings on the issue and received input from the community. The input the school board received was used to design several non-violence programs that were later implemented in the schools (Merina 1994).

In New York City, Janet Gonzales witnessed the death of three of her best friends. She stated, "nowadays people kill people for nothing." She continued that "people used to fight with their hands or with sticks or with bottles but now nobody fights like that no more." She claimed that "in the streets, the violence is so bad that you can not argue with somebody because they might pull out a gun" (Moyers 1995).

According to Rose (1995), eleventh grader Selima Nelson dropped out of a Washington, D.C., public school, explaining to her parents that she was being threatened by a handful of classmates. Selima had witnessed a knifing, and

the girls at her school who committed the crime said they would kill her if she talked to the police. She tried to transfer to another school, only to be told by the principal she was not welcome since trouble almost certainly would follow her.

Ultimately Selima completed high school through a GED program and went on to college. It is certainly not the way her parents planned it, but the cruel reality in this district, and in scores of others, is that the crisis in discipline and violence gripping public schools today had denied Selima Nelson her right to a public education.

In New Orleans, nine-year-old James Darby wrote President Clinton, imploring him to "stop the killing." James wrote:

I want you to stop the killing in the city. People are dead and I think that somebody might kill me. Would you please stop the people from dealing drugs? I am asking you nicely to stop it, I know you can do it, do it now, you could (quoted in Moyers 1995, 2).

Nine days later, walking home from a Mother's Day picnic with his mother, James Darby was shot in the head and killed, the victim of a shotgun fired into a crowd, allegedly by a disgruntled young man (Moyers 1995).

Moyers (1995) stated that young James was both prophetically right and understandably wrong in his plea. He was right that violence in his city, indeed in almost every U.S. city and in many suburbs and towns as well, threatens tens of thousands of children and teenagers with



bodily and psychological harm. And he was right that this societal sickness would soon claim him as well. Danger and fear stalk too many homes, streets, and schools and more than any other group, children and teenagers are its victims, as well as its perpetrators. Yet, James was wrong in thinking that the "most powerful man in the world," even acting with the full force of government, could stop the scourge of violence that is cutting short so many young lives. It will take a far more profound and widespread response than any President can muster to end this latest social plague that deprives so many young people of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

Following James' death, President Clinton wrote his classmates, trying to console them. He wrote,

I am deeply saddened to learn of James' tragic death, and I assure each of you that I am determined to answer James' plea with tough and smart solutions to the crime problems in America (quoted in Sautter 1995, 30).

The President then invoked James Darby's tragic tale as he pressed the Congress to end six years of partisan bickering and pass his omnibus crime bill. The final version of the Congressional bill included a two-thirds cut of funds that would have been directed toward youth programs (Sautter 1995).

Many Americans feel that cuts in youth programs adversely affect inner-city youth. It has been noted that cuts in youth programs have a direct effect on youth crime.

Statistics show that crime in cities without youth programs is higher than crime in cities that possess these programs.

Although statistics prove that youth programs are important, the political forces feel that they are not. Therefore, the task of once more making the world safe for and from young people will be a long and arduous one. Many law enforcement officials, while pleased to get additional help that the crime bill provides, are skeptical about the ultimate impact of the law on crime and particularly on youth crime.

"The current crime bill and its more police on the streets and more prisons approach is not likely to have the effects that they are selling," confided an FBI agent who worked with the public schools and young people in Washington, D.C. (Sautter 1995, 35). He continued:

Congress has been passing similar crime bills since Nixon was in office more than 20 years ago, and it obviously has not had much impact. There are already three times as many people in jail as 15 years ago. The problem starts at home and in the community. Not enough people care about the things they should care about (Sautter 1995, 35).

The six incidents listed above occurred in six different locations, with the common denominator of all the incidents being violence. Across the country, the reality of violence, and particularly gun violence, has changed not only the safety of schools but the future of our children's lives.

The impact of violence affects schools, communities, teachers, and especially the children. Everyday school violence is more predictable than the sensational incidents that get widespread media attention. School violence is caused, at least in part, by educational policies and procedures governing schools and how those policies are implemented in individual schools. The policies and procedures are created and implemented by the board of education, whose members are far removed from the problem of everyday school violence. The policies and procedures range from informing school administrators of the time school will begin and end to what type of discipline should be used and why it should be used. The policies and procedures are mere guidelines to be used at the principals' discretion. Consequently, the implementation of these policies and procedures is based on the principal's philosophy and perception of discipline.

A variety of crimes affect schools. They range from vandalism to theft. According to the U.S. Justice Department National School Safety Center's report, "Violent Schools-Safe Schools," it was estimated that replacing damaged or stolen property from crimes such as trespassing, breaking and entering, theft of school property, and vandalism are costing school systems \$200 million per year (Toby 1994).

Vandalism, called "malicious mischief" by the legal system, is a nuisance in most schools. Vandalism is not a

major threat to the educational process. But vandalism of school property, especially major vandalism and fire setting, is a precursor of school violence because its existence suggests that school authorities are not in control and "anything goes" (Toby 1994).

Violence against teachers (assaults, rapes, and robberies) is more rare than violence against students. It is an appreciable problem only in a handful of schools, but, when it occurs, it has enormous symbolic importance. The violent victimization of teachers suggests that they are not in control of the school and disorder exists (Amsler 1994).

Disorder leads to violence partly because it prevents meaningful learning from taking place. Thus, an insolent student who responds disrespectfully to his teacher commits an offense against school order. Verbal abuse of a teacher interferes with education more than would larceny from a desk or locker, mainly because it prevents a teacher from maintaining classroom authority, which interferes with learning (Toby 1994).

#### Statement of the Problem

It has been reported that metropolitan Atlanta's inner-city elementary, middle, and high schools are being infested with discipline problems and violent acts. Part of the explanation for greater incidence of disorder in schools in central cities is that there is less consensus in inner

cities that education is crucially important (Makesich 1994). Therefore, the problem addressed in this study was teachers' perceptions of factors that are associated with school violence. The focus was on elementary, middle, and high schools in the Atlanta Public Schools system.

There are several reasons why this occurs. One reason is that social trends in American society have tended greatly to reduce the effectiveness of adult control over students in public schools. According to Burke (1991), the influx of gangs, guns, and drugs into the schools is another reason there is violence. Loss and lack of jobs, low income of parents, and single family female heads of households are reasons noted by Grossnickle (1992) that influence violence. Makesich (1994) stated that violence occurs because big cities tend to be the first stop of immigrants from less developed societies where, frequently, formal secular education is less valued. These developments have simultaneously tempted enrolled students to be unruly.

#### Significance of the Study

There are myriad reasons why controlling school violence is so important to school administrators, community leaders, educators, parents, and students. Schools seem to reflect the conditions of the larger society (McCarthy 1992). This study can be used by school systems to identify

factors that teachers perceive are associated with school violence.

With an increase in school violence, school systems across America are searching for methods to reduce violence in their schools. Therefore, this study is significant in that it can be used by school systems to determine if implementing security guards and metal detectors enhances teachers' perceptions of safety.

Even though teachers are an important part of the education process, many feel they are not adequately performing their duties because of the increase of violence against them. This study is significant in that it can be used by school systems to implement methods that teachers feel reduce violence.

According to Hardy (1991), violence reportedly takes place every six seconds at or near school grounds. The President, the U.S. Attorney General, and the Secretary of Education have emphasized the need to reduce violence in our schools and improve our young people's ability to learn (Furlong 1994).

Since there is a call from people to reduce violence, this study is significant in that it will help to identify how teachers feel about factors that affect violence.

### Research Questions

Seven variables have been identified from the review of the literature as being related to violence. The influence of these variables on the teachers' perceptions of violence are not yet known. To investigate any possible relationships, the following research questions were formulated to guide the study.

1. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and the presence of security guards?

2. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and the presence of metal detectors?

3. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and the presence of gangs?

4. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and mass media?

5. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and student family composition?

6. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and student socio-economic status?

7. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and antiviolence programs?

8. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of security guards according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

9. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of metal detectors according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

10. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and gang presence according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

11. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the influence of mass media according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

12. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and student family composition according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

13. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and student socioeconomic status



according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

14. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and antiviolence programs according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

### Summary

School violence is often blamed on a violence-prone society. Some urban schools are located in slum neighborhoods where drug sellers routinely kill each other, as well as innocent bystanders, on streets surrounding the schools. It has been reported that in some urban schools more than fifty students have died in a five-year span, most of them in their own neighborhoods, and a few in the school itself. Some violence erupts inside schools when intruders import neighborhood violence to the schools or when students, products of the neighborhood, carry knives and guns to protect themselves (Baker 1980).

Some of the most frightening cases of school violence, those of insanely furious armed intruders, are not easy to predict or to prevent. These dramatic violent acts cannot be blamed on anything the school did or failed to do. These acts are more common in inner-city schools than in suburban and rural ones, but they can be found in these schools as well (Toby 1994).

Literature on school violence emphasizes the effects it has on administrators, teachers, and students. In addressing the question of how teachers perceive factors that are related to school violence, several studies were examined and several factors were identified as important to the relationship. Consequently, the researcher sought to determine whether there is a relationship between eight selected factors and school violence.

The chapter contains an introduction, the purpose of the study, the background of the problem, the statement of the problem, the significance of the study, and a presentation of the research questions which guided the study. The next chapter presents a review of related literature.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is discussed in this chapter. It focuses on selected variables that contribute to teachers' perceptions of school violence. This chapter is presented in three sections: historical background, causes of school violence, and factors that reduce school violence. The literature is outlined by related research of the variables in the study. The independent variables include presence of security guards, presence of metal detectors, presence of gangs, influence of mass media, family composition, student socioeconomic status, and anti-violence programs. The review of literature lays the foundation for the assumption to be proven and that, specifically, is the degree of school violence and the factors influencing violence as perceived by Atlanta Public Schools system teachers.

#### Historical Background

##### Early School Crimes

According to Baker (1980), it is important to begin by noting that the way children were treated in school in

the sixteenth century was closely tied to the way they were treated in the family. He supported this idea by stating that since the teacher obtained his rights to punish a student on the basis of the common law doctrine, in loco parentis, it is safe to assume that parental attitudes and behaviors tend to devolve upon school personnel.

In what was probably the most influential and controversial work in the area of the evolution of childhood, Aries (1962) argued that through the sixteenth century, children were treated as little adults. He stated that in medieval society, the idea of childhood did not exist. He reported that in work, play, and dress, there was no clear distinction between children and adults. To support his theory, Aries used pictorial illustrations; for instance, the form of a child was always portrayed in adult proportions. Aries studied the diary of Louis XIII's doctor, Heroard, who recorded the minute details of little Louis' life. While much of his evidence can be accepted, Aries overdrew his case. In fact, Louis was most often whipped for such common domestic offenses as refusing to eat.

However, DeMause (1974) raised another interesting point about Louis; he was the subject of sexual abuse by adults. As this indicated, before the seventeenth century children were ultimately regarded as objects, either of pleasure or of ownership. DeMause further stated that "little ones" did "not count" because they could be sold

off, abandoned, or killed. He stated that this occurred simply because so many babies died from neglect or illness, which easily led parents to consider very young children as temporary family members.

Dunn (1960) stated that even though there was no distinction between the activities of children and those of adults during this period, a significant gap still existed between the two groups. One distinction between the two groups was that adults were able to subject their children to severe punishment. He also stated that while they were not being whipped by actual slaves as in Roman times, youngsters were being whipped by parents who were figurative "slaves" of current punishing systems of religion or law.

Dunn (1960) further stated that perhaps the sickest and most telling behavior of all, which clearly demonstrates the intricate interrelationship between the two punishment systems, was the widespread practice of taking children to see hangings and gibbeted corpses and whipping them soundly on the site.

According to Luther (1974), by the seventeenth century, attitudes toward children had changed. Religious doctrines of both Catholicism and Protestantism helped promote two apparently conflicting images of the child: the child as innocent, but also as the product of sin. Luther stated these beliefs existed simply because they lived; these innocent children were believed to be sinful. They

were seen as products of sex which, itself, was sinful. Therefore, complete and tireless supervision and discipline became necessary (DeMause 1974).

Aries (1962) stated that the principle of total supervision was introduced in Jesuit schools and soon spread to other schools. He contended that early on, serious offenders in Jesuit schools were stripped in front of the whole community and beaten until they bled.

Cubberley (1964) cited that the Jesuits were quick to develop a highly formalized system of education. This system was obsessed with supervising the details of each student's daily life. The Jesuits laid out a system of punishments in which an older student was selected to administer beatings.

Newell (1972) concluded that until the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, whipping was administered only for acts of violence; that is, it was not an academic punishment. He also noted that by the seventeenth century whipping became a basic teaching aid. Archer (1971) reported that in the seventeenth century in France, a large number of students carried arms, which were commonly checked upon their entrance into the school building. He stated that since revolts were common, school masters literally feared for their lives; other people were afraid to walk past schools in fear of being attacked by students.

Falk (1991) argued that in England, even in the selective and prestigious public schools, conditions were poor and the behavior of the students was nothing short of mutinous. Between 1775 and 1836 mutinies, strikes, and violence were so frequent and sometimes so severe that the school masters had to call upon the military for assistance. According to Archer (1971), the moral atmosphere of the schools was terrible; there was neither influence to encourage good nor supervision to check evil.

Archer (1971) cited violence and misbehavior that occurred at other schools. He noted that in 1797 some boys at Rugby responded with extreme violence after being ordered to pay for damages they had done to a tradesman; they blew up the door of the headmaster's office, set fire to his books and to the school desks, and then retreated to an island in a nearby lake. He contended that the standoff continued until the school officials called in special constables, who seized control of the island through force. Archer noted that Rugby also experienced disciplinary problems with regard to drinking, gambling, and profanity.

#### Delinquency and Discipline in the Nineteenth Century

According to Moore (1972), with the coming of the nineteenth century there was in both America and England a growing public concern about increased community vice, particularly among juveniles. He stated that in 1791, 1821,

and 1822, for instance, concerned citizens of Philadelphia met to discuss the problem of teenage gangs. He cited that this great concern over juvenile delinquency coincided with an increasingly widespread provision of education for the masses in both England and the United States.

Butts and Cremin (1973) stated that by the end of the nineteenth century a changing pattern of immigration brought into the school system increasing numbers of children of southern and eastern European settlers. They reported that education underwent related changes; far more children attended school, their schooling extended over a greater period time, and they constituted a much more heterogeneous group than the American schools had seen before.

Bailyn (1960) cited that during the nineteenth century disciplinary problems in the schools became common. He stated that foreign observers of American schools concluded that American youths were particularly difficult to discipline because they were influenced by the society's egalitarian character.

### Youth Violence in the Twentieth Century

According to Breggin (1995), statistics on the rate of violent crime in America vary, but most sources agree levels are high and they have been increasing or have remained consistently high for the past three decades.



According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Reports (UCR), the rate of violent crime rose over 370 percent between 1960 and 1991. While in recent years overall levels of violence appear to have stayed stable, they are high enough that many Americans would agree with Delaware Senator Joseph R. Biden's 1993 declaration that America is "the most dangerous country in the world" (quoted in Baker 1991).

Using statistics from the Centers for Disease Control, Mercy (1992) stated that firearms are the eighth leading cause of death in the United States, taking some 35,000 lives in 1989 alone, 52 percent of them suicides, 42 percent homicides, and the rest unintentional injuries, for an overall rate of 14 firearm-related deaths per 100,000 people. He also stated that handguns account for about one-third of all firearms in the United States but account for two-thirds of all firearm-related deaths.

Zwirling (1993) added additional statistics about gun-related deaths. He stated that in 1993, guns accounted for 60 percent of suicides nationally and 63 percent of homicides. He further stated that suicidal and unintentional gun-related injuries are highest in rural areas.

According to Rosenberg (1993), on an average day there are 733 shootings. He continued to state that in 1988, one of every five adolescent deaths was gun-related. He also commented that more 15- to 24-year-old males died

from gunshot-related injuries than the total from all other natural causes.

According to a study of gun owners conducted by Weil and Hemenway (1992), they found research that links the availability of loaded firearms to gun violence tends to be more descriptive than analytic. However, they contended, the spontaneity with which deadly violence occurs has lent support to the contention that easy access to a loaded gun may be an important risk factor for both homicides and suicides, as well as unintentional shootings. They also found many homicides and suicides appear to be the result of impulsive behavior. They stated that homicides frequently occur during arguments, often domestic, when emotions run high and when one or both parties have been drinking. They suggested that individuals who take their own lives often do so when confronting a severe but temporary crisis.

A national survey found that firearms were present in 46 percent of households and that one in four households had a handgun. Over half of the handgun owners surveyed said that their guns were currently loaded (Callahan and Rivara 1992). These findings are consistent with those of a study conducted by Warshaw (1987), which found 55 percent of gun owners questioned stated that they always kept their weapons loaded; 10 percent said that their guns were loaded, unlocked, and within reach of children.

Fontanarosa (1995) conducted a study that found, despite evidence suggesting that weapons kept in the home are associated with an increase in the risks for homicide and suicide, approximately 49 percent of U.S. households have one or more firearms, many of which (particularly handguns) are kept in the home for personal protection. In this same survey, it was found that of 800 firearm owners, 38 percent of respondents who owned a gun for protection were more likely to report unsafe firearm storage practices such as keeping the weapon loaded and unlocked than were those who owned guns for others reasons.

In a study conducted by Graham (1989) which analyzed a national random sample of gun owners to identify factors associated with keeping guns loaded, he found: (1) The primary purpose for owning a gun is protection from crime, (2) the gun is a handgun, (3) there are no children in the household, and (4) the owner has not received instruction in the proper use of firearms. Graham (1989) also found that among the people surveyed, individuals who owned their weapons primarily for protection from crime were 65 percent more likely to keep their firearms loaded than individuals who owned their guns for other purposes. These results were consistent with the results from the Fontanarosa study.

Like Fontanarosa, Graham (1989) discovered that people who did not live with children were 40 percent more likely to report that they kept their weapons loaded than

gun owners living in households with children. Graham's study also revealed that individuals who lived in the South and those who were not white were more likely to keep their guns loaded.

According to virtually all experts, including the National Rifle Association and the Sporting Arms and Ammunition Manufacturer's Institute, the safe handling of a firearm requires that guns be stored unloaded in a locked area separate from the ammunition. It has been reported that gun owners who follow these guidelines have reduced the number of fatalities and injuries in their homes (Weil and Hemenway 1992).

Handguns are the most common type of firearm involved in gunshot deaths in the home, whether accidental or intentional. The most common reason given for owning a handgun is protection from crime, yet only a small percentage of firearm deaths in the home are the result of a incident requiring self-protection (Tardiff 1994).

Brady (1994) stated that by law, people with criminal records or a history of mental illness cannot purchase guns; but without an adequate background check of potential purchasers, a gun dealer cannot obtain this information. The Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act, passed by Congress in November of 1993 and signed into law by President Clinton, mandates a five-day waiting period with incentives for police to conduct background checks before a gun may be

purchased. It also contains a provision for the development of a national instant criminal background check system.

Anastate (1995) conducted a study that lends support to Weil and Hemenway's study. His research also suggested that easy access to a loaded gun may be a risk factor for accidental firearm injuries among children and may be a contributing factor for adolescent suicide. He found, however, that among the gun owners surveyed, those with children in the home were less likely to keep guns loaded. Of the participants surveyed, 30 percent had children and were more likely to keep loaded guns in the home.

Gun-related injuries and violence affect many components of society. Two of the most affected areas are the health care and medical insurance fields. Fontanarosa (1995) reported that based on data from the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System (NEISS), it was estimated that more than 99,000 persons were treated for nonfatal firearm-related injuries in United States hospital emergency centers from June of 1992 through May of 1993, and of the 99,000 people treated 57 percent required hospital admission. He stated that the study analyzed the financial aspects of the treatment for 750 patients with firearm-related injuries. The patients were hospitalized at an inner-city public trauma center from 1990 through 1992. The mean hospital charge per admission was \$52,271. He stated that most hospitals had to perform cost shifting, which

means the \$2.2 million loss sustained by the trauma center for treatment of 495 patients who had no insurance or Medicaid coverage was offset by the \$6.5 million net income realized from treatment of 255 patients with insurance coverage. Cost shifting by the hospitals resulted in an average profit of \$5,809 per firearm injury admission. Fontanarosa (1995) further stated that based on these data, it has been projected that the actual cost of medical care for firearm injuries in the United States would be approximately \$4.0 billion in 1996, with private insurance indirectly paying the majority of this amount.

According to Cession (1995), the consequences from the findings from the NEISS study for trauma care delivery and for trauma centers are substantial. He contended that as the incidence and severity of nonfatal firearm injuries continue to escalate and intensify in urban centers, the increasing numbers of patients requiring acute trauma resuscitation and emergency surgical intervention have the potential to overwhelm an already overburdened trauma care system.

Dailey (1992) stated that the increasing volume of patients with firearm-related injuries coupled with the economic losses resulting from providing uncompensated care to uninsured or underinsured patients may create significant financial burden and jeopardize the existence of some trauma centers. The factors that may create this problem include

the pricing structure, the degree of cost shifting of the institution, and the paying ability of the patient population served.

Mock (1994) stated that costs of uncompensated care delivered to uninsured or inadequately insured trauma patients, inadequate reimbursement for the provision of trauma care, and high operating costs associated with providing comprehensive trauma services have been identified as the leading factors that contribute to trauma center closures. He also stated that if these trends continue, gun-related injury patients will face the problem of not having adequate facilities available where they might seek treatment.

According to Voelker (1993), handgun violence is a preventable illness that kills 40,000 people and harms another 240,000 people each year in the United States. Voelker stated that gun violence direct and indirect costs surpass \$14 billion annually, 80 percent of which is paid by taxpayers. She also confirmed Rosenberg's statement that more than one-fourth of the victims are just 15 to 24 years old.

Voelker further stated that studies published in medical literature demonstrate that certain risk factors exist in the lives of those who are in danger of gun violence. These include prior experiences with violence, troublesome relationships, an environment where alcohol or

other drugs are prevalent, feelings of hopelessness, and access to a gun. In most circumstances a gun does not protect but, rather, increases the risk of death.

According to federal statistics, juveniles are still far less likely to kill than adults, but their murder rates are increasing. An unprecedented 2,003 youths were arrested for murder and nonnegligent manslaughter in 1990. In 1981, one in every ten people arrested in the United States for murder was under 18; by 1990, it was one in six (Bernard 1992).

According to Goldsten (1991), neither local nor federal statistics differentiate between gang-related and other juvenile homicides, but authorities say some of the nationwide increase can be explained by an explosion in gang- and drug-related violence in large metropolitan areas.

Bing (1991) stated that the numbers go far beyond the problem of urban gang violence. He stated that the escalating juvenile murder rate reflects a widespread penetration of violence into the lives of young people from all walks of life.

Ewing (1990) contended that child abuse, television and movies, pop youth culture, and the prevalence of handguns have made violence and images of violence staples in the diet of many young Americans. He further argued that kids learn to kill, they learn to be violent, and most learn it from their adult abusers.



Several recent studies of adolescent killers point to family influences among the possible causes of the violence. The studies dismiss the widespread popular belief that juvenile murderers are usually psychotic or kill because of bizarre mental health problems, concluding instead that many young murderers have been victims themselves (Bird 1990).

According to Broyles (1992), a psychiatric study published in 1988 by the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry of fourteen juveniles condemned to death found that twelve had been "brutally, physically abused" in their homes, and five had been sodomized by older male relatives. The physical abuse ranged from being hit on the head with a hammer to being placed on a hot stove top. The study, based on psychiatric tests and interviews with the youths, also showed that all but one of the condemned killers had grown up in households rife with violence. Broyles stated that one father beat his pregnant wife, and a stepfather "preferred hunting men to animals."

Broyles discovered that most of the parents in the study also had histories of alcoholism, drug abuse, and psychiatric treatment. The study revealed that not only did older family members fail to protect these adolescents, but they also often used the subjects to vent their rages and to satisfy their sexual appetites (Broyles 1992).

According to Castro (1992), a study of 72 youths charged with murder in Michigan found that only five were psychotic when they committed the crime. The study also found that one-third of the youths had alcohol and drug abuse problems, and most of them had parents who were divorced.

Chartrand (1992) stated that a recent study of homicides in Washington, D.C., by the federal Office of Criminal Justice Plans and Analysis found that eighteen of nineteen youths serving time for murder in the city had carried guns before their arrest. She admitted that the study may have been skewed by the realities of life on the city's toughest streets, but other research supports the contention that guns are widely available to youths everywhere.

A study of high school students nationwide by the Centers for Disease Control reported that one in twenty-five students had carried a gun in 1990, while a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in June of 1992 found that 34 percent of urban high school students perceived handguns to be easily accessible. These studies paint a grotesque picture of a society steeped in violence, especially by firearms, and so numbed by the ubiquity and prevalence of violence as to seemingly accept the inevitable (Hilts 1992).

### Causes of School Violence

According to Sautter (1995), seventeen hundred years ago, the Roman emperor and Stoic philosopher Marcus Aurelius observed that poverty is the mother of all crime. Sautter stated that the emperor's insight endures because it is at least partially true. Sautter contended that for the past twenty-five years, child welfare experts have warned that the grinding poverty, inequitable educational opportunity, latchkey homes, child abuse, domestic violence, and family breakups, as well as the general abandonment of children to a constant barrage of televised mayhem, would result in escalating real-world violence.

Fontenot (1993) stated that causes of school violence arise from cultural, ethnic, and special education classification that make the schooling process nearly impossible to implement. Davies (1993) agreed with Fontenot; he felt that the cultural, ethnic, special education classifications, and diversity appear in the manner of work ethics. He felt that the characteristics and behavioral patterns of these children form a counter school culture which prevents the average nonviolent, obedient school-directed learner from exercising their right to an equal educational opportunity.

Curwin (1995) disagreed with Fontenot and Davies, stating that the causes of violence are motivated by our perceptions of violence. He felt that statistics do little

to calm our fears when the evening news reports a gruesome murder or a shooting in an elementary school. He contended that our perceptions are fed by unrestrained media, both in entertainment and news, which drive a continual escalation of sensationalism, generating new levels of horror as old ones are satiated.

According to Rubel (1994), violence and vandalism in our nation's schools began to come to the public's attention in the early to middle 1970s as the Senate Subcommittee to Investigate Juvenile Delinquency began paying extensive attention to the phenomenon. Much of the material collected by that Subcommittee seemed to show dramatic increases in overt acts of criminal and aggressive behavior on the part of students.

The following are among the factors that were mentioned as contributors that increase violence in public schools:

1. Increases of the schools' use of high-technology equipment such as electric typewriters, closed-circuit television studios, and extensive physics and chemistry laboratories that caused larger loss figures to appear in school districts than had been the case during earlier years, when this type of equipment was unknown.

2. Dramatic increases between 1950 and 1980 in the physical size of schools (and the numbers of students in

them) provided a greater opportunity for violence and therefore greater crime risk for students.

3. Increases in the complexity of due process compliance procedures required by wide-ranging Supreme Court cases slowed down the schools' administering of some areas of discipline to students, forcing schools to increase tolerance levels for unruly and unwanted behavior.

4. Increases in the Bureau of Labor Statistics' Consumer Price Index reflected the increased costs of replacement and repair as a function of nationwide inflation in the 1960s. As inflation rose sharply, the attention of school districts had to turn with increased force toward the costs of crimes in schools, which were beginning to skyrocket.

As these factors came increasingly to the public's attention, the public became rightfully alarmed. Demands were made repeatedly for government to "do something." Exactly what should be done was never clear, for it was never clear what was wrong.

After a careful review of the literature concerning causes of violence, it has been determined that the breakdown in the family, violence in the media, and the drug trade are all contributors to violence. The relationship of those contributors to violence is discussed in the following section.

### Breakdown of the Family

According to Fagan (1995), there is a clear correlation between the surge in criminal violence in large urban communities and the collapse of marriage. He stated that the breakdown of the traditional family over the last thirty years has left a legacy of violence and chaos in America's urban neighborhoods. He contended that children who come from single-parent families headed by teenage mothers are far more likely than others to live in abusive, neglectful, poverty-ridden homes and, as a consequence, are more likely to become violent teenagers and adults.

Mattern (1995) stated that policy makers at last are coming to recognize the connection between the breakdown of American families and various social problems. He stated that the unfolding debate in recent years has been over welfare reform. Many feel that children born into single-parent families are much more likely than children of intact families to fall into poverty and later become welfare dependents themselves.

A review of empirical evidence released by the National Research Center (1995) gives policy makers insight into the root causes of crime. Consider, for instance:

1. Over the past thirty years, the rise in violent crime parallels the rise in families abandoned by fathers.
2. High-crime neighborhoods are characterized by high concentrations of families abandoned by fathers.

3. State-by-state analysis indicates that a 10 percent increase in the percentage of children living in single-parent homes leads typically to a 17 percent increase in juvenile crime.

4. The rate of violent teenage crime corresponds with the number of families abandoned by fathers.

5. The type of aggression and hostility that is demonstrated by a future criminal often is foreshadowed in unusual aggression as early as age five or six.

6. The future criminal tends to be an individual rejected by other children as early as the first grade who goes on to form his own group of friends, often the future delinquent gang.

On the other hand:

1. Neighborhoods with a high degree of religious practice are not high-crime neighborhoods.

2. Even in high-crime inner-city neighborhoods, well over 90 percent of children from safe, stable homes do not become delinquents. By contrast only 10 percent of children from unsafe, unstable homes in these neighborhoods avoid crime.

3. Criminals capable of sustaining marriage gradually move away from a life of crime after they get married.

4. The mother's strong affectionate attachment to her child is the child's best buffer against a life of crime.

5. The father's authority and involvement in raising his children are also a great buffer against a life of crime.

The scholarly evidence, in short, suggests that at the heart of the explosion of crime in America is the loss of the capacity of fathers and mothers to be responsible in caring for the children they bring into the world. This loss of love and guidance at the intimate levels of marriage and family has broad social consequences for children and for the wider community. The empirical evidence shows that too many young men and women from broken families tend to have a much weaker sense of connection with their neighborhood and are prone to exploit its members to satisfy their unmet needs or desires. This contributes to a loss of a sense of community and to the disintegration of neighborhoods into social chaos and violent crime. Fagan (1995) stated that if policy makers are to deal with the root causes of crime, they must also deal with the rapid rise of illegitimacy.

Campbell (1993) stated that the evidence of the professional literature is overwhelming. Teenage criminal behavior has its roots in habitual deprivation of parental love and affection going back to early infancy. She stated that future delinquents invariably have a chaotic, disintegrating family life. This frequently leads to aggression



and hostility toward others outside the family. Most delinquents are not withdrawn or depressed. It is quite the opposite. They are actively involved in their neighborhood, but often in a violent fashion. Campbell contended that this hostility is established in the first few years of life. By age six, habits of aggression and free-floating anger typically are already formed. She stated that, by way of contrast, normal children enjoy a sense of personal security derived from their natural attachment to their mother. The future criminal is often denied that natural attachment.

The relationship between parents, not just the relationship between mother and child, has a powerful effect on very young children. Children react to quarreling parents by disobeying, crying, hitting other children, and in general being much more antisocial than their peers. And, significantly, quarreling or abusive parents do not generally vent their anger equally on all their children. Such parents tend to vent their anger on their more difficult children. This parental hostility and physical and emotional abuse of the child shapes the future delinquent (Bean 1992).

According to the professional literature, the absence of the father is the single most important cause of poverty. The same is true for crime. According to Kevin and Karen Wright (1995, 141):

Research into the idea that single-parent homes may produce more delinquents dates back to the early 19th century. . . .

Officials at New York State's Auburn Penitentiary, in an attempt to discern the causes of crime, studied the biographies of incarcerated men. Reports to the legislature suggested that family disintegration resulting from the death, desertion, or divorce of parents led to undisciplined children who eventually became criminals.

Blow (1993) suggested that the growth of the poverty-ridden family today is linked directly with the growth of the family headed by the always-single mother. This modern form of family disintegration has its consequences for criminal behavior. The growth in crime is paralleled by the growth in families abandoned by fathers.

Dilulio (1994) found that the rate of juvenile crime within each state is closely linked to the percentage of children raised in single-parent families. States with a lower percentage of single-parent families, on average, will have lower rates of juvenile crime. State-by-state analysis indicates that, in general, a 10 percent increase in the number of children living in single-parent homes (including divorces) accompanies a 17 percent increase in juvenile crime.

Farmer (1995) discovered that along with the increased probability of family poverty and heightened risk of delinquency, a father's absence is associated with a host of other social problems. The three most prominent effects are lower intellectual development, high levels of

illegitimate parenting in the teenage years, and higher levels of welfare dependency.

According to a 1990 report from the U.S. Department of Justice (1995), more often than not, missing and homeless children come from single-parent families, families with stepparents, and cohabiting-adults families. Children from these families are more likely to become violent criminals.

McCormick (1995) identified several reasons why fatherless children often become violent criminals. In normal families a father gives support to his wife, particularly during the period surrounding birth and in the early childhood years when children make heavy demands on her. During this time, the father is seen as the mother's "burn-out" prevention. A single mother does not have this support, and the added emotional and physical stress may result in fatigue and less parent availability to the child, increasing the risk of a relationship with the child that is emotionally more distant. The single mother generally is less able to attend to all of her child's needs as quickly or as fully as she could if she were well taken care of by a husband.

The professional literature of criminology is surprisingly consistent on the real root cause of violent crime: the breakdown of the family. The sequence has its deepest roots in the absence of stable marriage.

Despite the good news that overall crime rates have dropped in recent years, the frightening news is that both the level and viciousness of teenage violent crime have been rising steadily. More ominous still, this was set in motion sixteen to eighteen years ago, when these violent teenagers were born into chaotic family and social conditions. Since then, these conditions have become more prevalent, and violent teenage crime has risen (Polsby 1993).

### Violence in the Media

Hattemer (1996) argued that the violence that children see every day on television and in the movies teaches them to be violent as they become teenagers. She contended that the increase in violent crime--rape, assault, and murder--in the United States, especially that committed by teenagers, relates directly to increasing amounts of violence portrayed in the media.

According to Noguera (1995), youth crime is on everyone's mind. It was the focus of virtually every political campaign of 1994. There has been talk of boot camps, stricter laws, trying children as adults for committing serious crimes, larger prisons, harsher sentences, gun control, and curfews. Everyone wants to take the kids off the streets so we can feel safe again. Why? So they can watch more murder and rape on television and video? According to the American Psychological Association (1994),

even before leaving elementary school, the average child has seen eight thousand murders and one hundred thousand acts of violence on television. Social science, clinical concepts, and common sense all agree that what children watch affects who they become, what they believe, what they value, and how they behave (Adler 1995).

Television's influence on children starts earlier than most realized. Andrew Meltzoff (1994) found that fourteen-month-old infants can watch an unfamiliar toy being dismantled and reassembled on television and repeat the actions twenty-four hours later. Even at this early age, television acts as a guide to real-life behavior. Throughout childhood, children learn by imitating what they see others doing.

Backman (1995) felt that two- to six-year-old children cannot evaluate the messages they receive from the media they watch. They simply accept what they see as normal behavior. Children cannot tell the difference between reality and fantasy until the fifth or sixth grade. Six- to twelve-year-olds imitate what they see and hear without fully understanding the consequences of what they are doing. Most adolescents do not have a fully developed, internal set of morals and values. Backman contended that adolescents accept the conduct they see in the media as the social norm and integrate it into their own behavior patterns.

Chesler (1995) asked: "What are the predominant messages of television, movies, and other media that our children are accepting and imitating?" He suggested that children feel that violence is an everyday occurrence and an acceptable way of solving problems and that promiscuous sex is normal and expected of everyone, including younger and younger children.

According to Dr. Paul Howard (1995), while television has potential for good, at the present time its influence on children's lives is largely negative. He felt that television programming is so hostile and aggressive that it produces tremendous anxiety in young watchers.

Barr (1995) agreed with Howard; he reported that television and violence have been almost synonymous since 1977. He stated that nine of every ten television programs contained violence.

Reports show that today, while there is more variety, there are more sources of violence than ever before. In addition to violent action-adventure movies and television dramas, violence pervades music videos, rap music, documentaries, commercials, and news broadcasts (O'Neil 1991).

Cose (1995) discovered that the networks provide up to 10 violent acts per hour; cable, up to 18 per hour; and children's cartoons, 32 violent acts per hour. He stated that movies like "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" raise the

count to 133 violent acts per hour. The body count is rising, too: "Total Recall," 74 dead; "Robocop 2," 81 dead; "Rambo III," 106 dead; and "Die Hard 2," 264 dead.

This mass-produced, cheap industrial violence is something quite new in our culture. The new heroes glamorize violence for its own sake. The violence is the story, but it is not an element necessary to the telling of the story. Added to this is the influence of violent video games and fantasy games that encourage children to spend hours planning how to kill or maim more successfully. Mix in violent comic books and serial killer trading cards, and society has created a culture that gives its children a steady diet of violent role models but very little old-fashioned nurture and direction from parents (Kagan 1995).

According to Shapiro (1995), for nearly a decade, judges and police officers have been exclaiming that they have never before seen rapists and murderers who are so young. The news, he cited, in its promotion of the sensational, keeps the tragic headlines ever before us. What some feared might one day happen is indeed happening. Shapiro felt the subculture that has long been singing about beating up women, killing parents, and murdering for fun has surfaced.

One-half of the sex offenders in this country are now under the age of eighteen. Durkin (1994) cited a 1988 Michigan crime report which stated that 681 juveniles who

averaged fourteen years of age were convicted of sexually assaulting children who averaged seven years of age. She stated that these are not always violent or deeply troubled children. She believed they are children who have been exposed too early to material they cannot process without imitating.

According to Larson (1994), children see violence, be it sexual or physical, on cable TV and computers in their own homes, and they hear it on the telephone. Dial-a-porn companies have admitted that 75 to 85 percent of their customers are children. Larson felt that children are overstimulated by what they see and hear, and they act it out on younger siblings or playmates.

The increase in the seriousness of juvenile crime may be explained further by the fact that violence has become increasingly graphic and gory. According to David Barry (1994), the juvenile delinquency portrayed in the 1950s movies consisted almost entirely of assaults with fists and weapons which left victims injured but alive.

Since then, he said, the level of criminal violence reported in everyday news stories has become almost unrecognizable. He offered the following statistics as evidence of the effect of the first twenty-nine years of television on crime in the United States. In 1951, there were 6,820 murders, 16,800 rapes, and 52,090 robberies. By 1980, these figures had increased to 23,000 murders, 78,920



rapes, and 548,220 robberies--vastly more than the 47 percent population increase from 150 million to 220 million. These statistics show that the murder rate is increasing six times faster than the rate of population growth. He stated that it is now the leading cause of death for black youths and the second leading cause of all fifteen- to twenty-four-year-olds. Violence, according to Barry (1994), is the leading cause of injury to fifteen- to forty-four-year-old women. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control called it both a leading public health issue and an epidemic.

Researchers offer numerous explanations of how and why media violence translates into real-life violence. They theorize that when a child observes violence used as a means of solving conflicts, the event is recorded in his brain and stored in his memory bank. According to Groves (1994), this scene can be reinforced by subsequent violent scenes, which eventually blend into a general script of how to react to conflict. She felt the more graphic the violence, the more likely it will catch the child's attention and become part of a script stored in the child's memory, waiting to be retrieved when faced with a similar conflict situation in real life.

Walker (1995) agreed with Groves; she stated that watching violence primes the pump and starts a network of associations. As media violence is absorbed into a child's

thoughts, it activates related aggressive ideas and emotions that eventually lead to aggressive behavior.

Powell (1995) agreed with both of the previous authors. He reported that violence that is rewarded or left unpunished appears to be sanctioned in a child's mind. It is, therefore, much more likely to be imitated. He felt that violence that appears to be justified or portrayed as necessary for a good cause is even more likely to be imitated. He compared Japanese films to American films and the violence that occurs in both countries. Powell cited that one reason that Japanese films do not produce as much real-life violence as American films is the way the Japanese portray violence. They highlight the pain, suffering, and tragic consequences that follow. The Japanese teach an altogether different lesson than America's glamorized violence.

Loeber (1995) summarized the effect of violence seen in the media on America's youth. He stated that not everyone reacts the same way to violence. He reported that poorly nurtured children with few inner strengths and without internalized boundaries are more susceptible to its influence than well-nurtured children who have received a strong value system from their parents. Loeber stated that children who are undersupplied with parental love are often angry and chaotic inside. He felt they are drawn to violent films, heavy metal music, and gangster rap because it

reflects their inner turmoil. He stated it both reinforces and offers approval for their negative attitudes. He cited that the combination of being undersupplied with parental nurture and overstimulated by violent media can be deadly.

Gitlin (1995) disagreed that the mass media is responsible for youth violence. He stated that the media, from lurid nineteenth-century billboards and tabloids to today's television cartoons and blockbuster movies, have been blamed for episodes of violence in society. Gitlin asserted that despite more than a century of speculation about the link between media violence and real-life aggression, there is little evidence that more than a handful of "impressionable people" have been so influenced that they have committed violent acts based directly on what they have seen. He did concur, however, that media violence can contribute to an atmosphere that legitimizes violence as a method of resolving conflict.

#### Violence and the Drug Trade

According to Wilkerson (1995), turf wars, drive-by shootings, and executions are the legacy of the crack cocaine epidemic of the late 1980s and early 1990s. She maintained that as the popularity of crack increased, so did the number of guns and the incidence of violence perpetrated by drug dealers trying to expand their markets. Despite the

waning of crack sales in many urban areas, she contended the violence associated with the drug trade continues.

Inciardi (1995) agreed with Wilkerson about the violence caused by crack cocaine. He stated that in 1985, few people nationally had ever heard of crack cocaine, but it was already a problem in Miami and Dade County. He cited a study conducted with 600 inner-city youths who were "seriously delinquent." Serious delinquency was defined as having committed, during the twelve-month period prior to interview, no less than ten FBI Index offenses (homicide, rape, assault, robberies, burglary, larceny/theft, motor vehicle theft, and arson) or 100 lesser crimes. The focus of the research was not on crack but, rather, the drug-taking and drug-seeking behaviors.

All of the youths in this population were daily users of at least one drug. Inciardi stated that marijuana was used three or more times a week by 95 percent of the sample, while 64.2 percent used some form of cocaine daily, and all but 9 percent used at least one coca product (powder cocaine, crack cocaine, or coca paste) three or more times a week. Inciardi cited the criminal activity of the sample. He reported that the sample reportedly perpetrated some 429,136 criminal acts during the twelve-month period prior to the interview--an average of 702 offenses per subject.

These data in this study addressed a number of points about the relationships between crack, crime, and violence in Miami and perhaps elsewhere. In particular, the recent media reports appear to be correct in their assessment of the involvement of youth in crack distribution and violent crime as significant trends in some locales. These reports, however, may be overreporting some aspects of the crack-violence connection while underreporting others yet, at the same time, profoundly underestimating the significance of the whole crack-crime connection (Inciardi 1995).

According to Bing (1991), who agreed with Inciardi, although crack distribution by hard-core adolescent offenders in inner cities may not reflect the gang-related violence that has been suggested in Los Angeles, it is nevertheless highly criminogenic. He stated that young crack dealers commonly violate not merely drug laws, but also those protecting persons and property.

#### Factors That Reduce Youth Violence

According to Stephen Braun and Judy Pasternak (1995), Americans are preoccupied more than ever by violent crime. They contended that although violent crime has actually decreased slightly in recent years, a growing number of Americans appear threatened by examples of mayhem

they read about in their own communities and are looking for solutions. Solutions for reducing violence are discussed in this chapter. Whether increased incarceration is an effective solution to violent crime in American society is among the issues debated in this chapter. Conflict resolution programs and punishment are the other issues that are also debated as factors that reduce youth violence.

### Incarceration

Michael Block (1995) and Steven Twist (1995) argued that the most effective response to violent crime is increasing the incarceration of criminals. These critics maintained that the nation's criminal justice system has a revolving door--that many violent criminals spend little time or no time in prison but are instead allowed back on the streets, where they commit crimes. According to Block (1995) and Twist (1995), statistics from the 1980s reveal that increases in prison populations translate directly into reduced rates of violent crime.

Others dispute the effectiveness of increased incarceration in curtailing violent crime. James Austin and John Irwin (1994) analyzed statistics from the 1960s through the early 1990s and concluded that crime rates have not declined, despite the massive increases in prison and jail populations.

Patrick McCormick (1995, 61) agreed; he wrote:

Since the early 1980s we have nearly tripled our prison capacity and increased the Federal Bureau of Prisons' budget over 470 percent . . . . In the same period we have more than tripled our prison population . . . . And yet neither of these responses have had an appreciable effect on the rate of violent crime.

McCormick argued that America's growing prison system may, in fact, perpetuate violent crime by serving as a breeding ground for violent felons.

The Department of Justice (DOJ) is the executive department of the U.S. government responsible for enforcing federal laws. The DOJ (1995) disagreed with the critics and argued that the incarceration of criminals is the solution to violent crime in America. To support its argument, the department cited statistics reporting that in the 1960s, when incarceration rates were low, crimes rates increased rapidly. By contrast, according to the DOJ, in the 1980s and early 1990s, when incarceration rates were high, rates of reported crimes increased much more slowly and estimates of total crime decreased.

#### Conflict Resolution Programs

Many of the nation's schools have instituted conflict resolution programs designed to teach youths how to settle disputes nonviolently. According to Prothrow-Stith (1995), programs in many schools all over the country have been designed to help school children with what one school

teacher called "the fourth R--relationships." The goals of these "conflict resolution" programs is to teach children how to get along with one another peacefully. She cited five ideas that all of the conflict resolution programs share:

1. Conflict is a normal part of human interaction.
2. When people take the time to explore their prejudices, they can learn how to get along with and enjoy people whose backgrounds are different.
3. Most disputes do not have to have a winner or loser. Win/win is the ideal way to resolve most disputes.
4. Children and adults who learn how to assert themselves nonviolently can avoid becoming bullies or victims.
5. The self-esteem of children will be enhanced if they learn to build nonviolent, nonhostile relationships with their peers.

Douglas (1995) stated that conflict resolution goes hand in hand with violence prevention curriculum. She stated that it is extremely important to help teenagers understand the risk of violence to their survival, to learn about their own anger, and to learn some practical skills for deflecting angry confrontations and fights.

Elias (1994) agreed with Douglas and Prothrow-Stith; she stated that the point of violence prevention is to provide young people with alternatives to fighting. She felt



that urban teenagers are not surprised to learn that most homicides occur among people of the same race, people who know each other.

Daniel Webster (1995) disagreed with the previous viewpoints. He felt there are four reasons why conflict resolution is ineffective. He opposed these programs for four reasons: (1) There is no evidence that the programs are effective, (2) similar programs addressing other health and social problems have failed, (3) the underlying assumptions of the program are questionable, and (4) the programs enable politicians to ignore the social and economic conditions that cause youth violence.

According to Vernon (1994), she was skeptical that existing conflict resolution programs can reduce interpersonal violence, for reasons that were similar to Webster's. She cited that: (1) There is no evidence that such programs produce long-term changes in violent behavior or risk of victimization; (2) in the absence of other supporting interventions, classroom-based curricula generally have failed to produce sustainable behavior changes for other health and social problems among youth; (3) the assumptions regarding conflict resolution programs and violence are questionable; and (4) the programs provide political cover for politicians, bureaucrats, and school officials and distract the public from the structural determinants of youth violence.

## Punishment

According to John Hood (1995), attempts to reduce violence in America's public schools have been hampered by two forces: an antipunishment philosophy within the education profession and legal restrictions on schools' ability to discipline unruly students. Hood stated that when politicians talk about education issues, they often mention such topics as school spending, teacher quality, parental involvement, and the curriculum. But when teachers talk about education issues, they almost always zero in on the topic that most concerns them: school violence.

Hall (1995) cited one reason why violence in schools is up. He stated that discipline in schools is less predictable and not uniformly enforced. Students are more difficult to keep quiet, harder to teach, and deficient in basic personal and behavior skills. He felt that educational activists tend to focus more on opposing discipline practices such as corporal punishment and expulsion than on addressing the problem.

Hilton (1994) agreed with Hall; he argued that today's public educators are probably incapable of dealing effectively with school violence and discipline problems. To do so, he stated, requires rethinking how education is organized and the proper relationship between pupil and teacher and, more generally, between pupil and school.

Leonard (1995) partially agreed with Hall and Hilton. He argued that schools are legally restricted to what they can successfully do, as exemplified by cases such as Goss v. Lopez, which decided that the due process clause in the Fourteenth Amendment gave students the right to receive oral and written notice of the charges against them and, if they deny the charges, an explanation of the evidence and a chance to tell their side of the story. He stated that while no formal hearing was required for short-term suspension, the Court suggested that more formal procedures might be required to impose longer suspensions or expulsions. He commented that suspension remains an important response to acts of violence by students, but these procedural limitations have made administrators more hesitant to use them and hamper the school's ability to effectively discipline students. Therefore, most school officials feel that their hands are tied. They experience pressure from parents and the community to combat violence but are legally bound as to what they can actually do.

Noguera (1995) disagreed with this view. He argued that traditional disciplinary methods and increased security efforts will not be effective at reducing violence in America's schools. He felt that the presence of adults who are genuinely interested in students' welfare can do more than threats of punishment to encourage nonviolent behavior.

Stanko (1995) believed that there are internal reasons why schools are vulnerable to violence. He cited three reasons why this occurs. First, he stated that many teachers receive no training on how to deal with violence. Secondly, the individuals responsible for enforcing discipline often have no legitimacy or credibility in the eyes of students. And finally, he stated that there is an absence of moral authority, which is different from institutional authority or the authority derived from one's job title.

According to Douglas (1995), as a starting point toward dealing with violence in schools, factors that contribute to the problem must be identified. She cited the availability of guns and the promotion of violence in the media that may seem to be beyond the control of parents and school personnel as factors. She argued that while strategies must be devised for addressing these issues, focus must be on how to create a school environment that promotes respect, dignity, and nonviolence.

### Summary

This chapter examined both research and literature reviews related to factors that affect school violence. The literature review produced a number of contributions and insights into the characteristics and factors which are present in schools where violence exists. The presence of

security guards, the presence of metal detectors, the presence of gangs, the mass media, the composition of families, student socioeconomic status, and antiviolence programs were among the contributive factors that enhanced the perceptions of teachers on school violence.

In spite of some contradictory comments on the association between some of these factors and school violence, there was enough evidence found in the literature reviewed to support the assumption that the above-mentioned factors are associated with the perception of school violence.

### CHAPTER III

#### THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study investigated selected Atlanta Public Schools teachers' perceptions of variables that are associated with violent acts in elementary, middle, and high schools. This chapter presents and explains the anticipated relationships between the variables. The variables are defined, and the limitations of the study are discussed.

#### Theoretical Framework

Moper (1995) stated that the youth murder rate is worse in the 1990s than it has ever been. He stated that the problem is coupled with the decreasing age of many perpetrators. According to Ambler (1994), children are becoming more violent at earlier ages, and they are committing more violent crimes, often repeatedly, before they even have a chance to become teenagers.

Chillily (1995) agreed that violence among youth is increasing. She stated that officials are particularly alarmed by reports of skyrocketing rates of violent crime among juveniles. According to the U.S. Department of

Justice (1995), the number of juveniles arrested for homicides increased by 85 percent between 1987 and 1991. Along with the reported upswing in the number of violent juvenile crimes, law officials are also concerned by the changes in the characteristics of those perpetrating the violence (Baker 1991).

Younger and younger children, even preteens, are committing crimes such as sexual assault and murder (Heidi 1992). According to Dandy Damson, head of a county juvenile division in Florida, "Ten years ago, it was a shock to see a seven-, eight-, or nine-year-old come into the system. Now it is not, it is a trend" (Leone 1992).

James A. Fox wrote that this new generation of youngsters is more inclined to resort to violence over trivial issues--a pair of Nikes, a leather jacket, or even a challenging glance--or for no apparent reason (Chillily 1995). Monagle (1991) agreed that the glamour of high-priced, high-fashion items has increased the violence. She stated that celebrities such as Michael Jordan and Spike Lee have made Air Jordan sneakers the ultimate hip status symbol among inner-city minority teenagers. According to Manning (1991), cities such as Chicago, New York, Philadelphia, Houston, and Baltimore are reporting a growing number of incidents in which teenagers are being stabbed, shot, and killed over their sneakers, varsity jackets, and leather coats.

While youth violence occurs among all segments of society, recently many have focused on the violence among young minority males (especially blacks) in the inner cities. John J. Dilulio, Jr. (1994), a professor at Princeton University, wrote that never before has violent crime been so concentrated among teenage and young adult male inner-city blacks. He cited FBI statistics indicating that in 1991 the violent crime arrest rate for black youths was five times higher than for white youths. He also pointed out that while arrest rates are disproportionately high for African American youths, black youths are also more likely than white youths to be victims of violent crime. According to FBI statistics, homicide is the leading cause of death for young black men (Breggin 1995).

No consensus exists on the reasons for these reported changes in the extent and nature of youth violence. Many explanations have been offered, all of which are the subject of much debate.

Focusing on the inner cities, some researchers maintain that the recent increase in crime began with the arrival of crack cocaine in the mid-1980s. The arrival of crack cocaine resulted in fierce competition for drug turf among rival gangs (Gest 1996).

Jackson (1996) added that some people blame youth violence on a rise in single-parent, female-headed families, which some critics believe produce children who are more



prone to emotional problems and violent behavior than the children of two-parent families.

Sautter (1995) agreed that often kids who exhibit violent behavior are from violent homes and backgrounds. They may have a brother or two in jail for a violent crime, and there may be a history of mental illness in the family. They probably have witnessed domestic violence in the family, and several kids have seen their fathers or brothers shot or murdered. Many of these kids are already third-generation violent offenders; their whole lives have been surrounded by violence.

Males (1996) argued that the violence that pervades American popular culture, especially the mass media, contributes to youth violence. He stated that it contributes in two ways: it reinforces the notion that violence is an acceptable means of resolving conflicts, and it desensitizes young people to the harmful consequences of violent acts. Gitlin (1995) contended that the widespread presence of guns in American society and the ease with which such weapons can be obtained by young people are important factors in the rising rates of youth violence.

Some children who become violent are usually not safe in their own homes and are regularly victimized by the adults entrusted to care for them (Moyers 1995). According to Sautter (1995), there is a direct and indisputable connection between violence in the home or against children

in the home and subsequent violent behavior by those children.

Roberts (1993) stated psychologists confirm that children exposed to violence are sometimes as traumatized as children in war zones. For many youngsters, their American childhood has literally become a war zone in which they are entrapped. They are forced to run for cover and avoid playgrounds, front yards, neighborhood streets, and even their own homes.

In some places where American children grow up, gunfire rattles on and on, day and night. Many inner-city youngsters go to more funerals than movies and are scarred for years thereafter by the violence they have witnessed (Hardy 1991).

The violence inflicted on the young takes more than a physical toll. The American Psychological Association reported that the posttraumatic stress that children experience as either victims of or witnesses to violence includes intrusive imagery, emotional construction or avoidance, fears of recurrence, sleep difficulties, disinterest in significant activities, and attention difficulties (Sautter 1995).

All of these problems interfere with normal development, with learning in school, and with living a happy childhood. Thus, violence endures deep in the psyches of

children long after their immediate victimization (Sautter 1995).

Violence these days seems random, but everyone is affected in some way. As the mass media dramatize youth crime incessantly on the evening news and create hyper-crime for the core of the entertainment industry, the children are suffering and living in fear (Amsler 1994). The real fear that accompanies the cumulative damage of real murders and assaults perpetrated by and upon young people is greatly magnified, becoming pervasive, perplexing, and paralyzing to the society at large (Curtis 1994). For example, one Northwestern University study found that three-fifths of local Chicago news time was devoted to coverage of violence, a factor that surely contributes to the public paranoia about violence (Centerwall 1992).

According to Sautter (1995), the problem of violence is complicated by 211 million firearms circulating among the American public. He claimed that there are more gun dealers in America than gas stations. Youth gangs have discovered that it is not too difficult to go into the arms business along with the drug business. This business is in the infancy stage on the world scene, so the nation's youth gangs are seeing the enormous profits made in the small arms business.

Furlong (1994) cited that of the over three million assorted crimes, about 11 percent of all crimes occur each

year in America's 85,000 public schools. That compares with one million crimes each year in America's workplaces.

Fagan (1995) stated that in recent years health officials and members of the medical profession have responded to the increase in youth violence by advocating a public health approach to violence in the American society. This approach is based on the idea that rather than reacting to incidents of violence after they occur, the medical community should attempt to keep violence from happening.

According to Flowers (1996), in order to achieve this goal, they advocate treating violence as a social disease. This involves identifying where violence is most prevalent and how it occurs, then devising and implementing interventions to prevent its occurrence. She further stated that most interventions involve education designed to alter attitudes and behaviors that researchers believe contribute to violence and to encourage people, especially teenagers, to settle their conflicts without violence. Durkin (1994) felt that these efforts should include public education campaigns, conflict resolution programs in the schools, and various programs intended to teach parenting and social skills in neighborhoods with high rates of violence.

Cose (1995) stated that this approach has drawn criticism from people who believe that the underlying causes of violence, especially in the inner cities, are social and economic problems such as poverty, racial discrimination, a

lack of employment opportunities, and decaying social institutions. He felt that rather than attempting to change the attitudes and behaviors of inner-city teens, the nation's leaders should address these structural causes of violence.

Weber (1996) stated that conflict resolution programs, which have been implemented in many American schools, strive to teach youths how to settle disagreements without resorting to violence are not effective. He argued that there is no evidence that these programs are effective, similar programs addressing other health and social problems are questionable, and these types of programs enable politicians to ignore the social and economic conditions that cause youth violence.

As a matter of record, crime in schools takes place every six seconds. Some critics charge that figures for school crime are significantly underreported because schools treat many incidents as discipline problems rather than as crimes.

As the violence increases, schools are taking measures to protect their students. Armed police-like security guards patrol the grounds of many inner-city schools. In some high-crime areas, students must submit to metal detectors, and gun-sniffing dogs roam the hallways (Monagle 1991).

Since most crimes in schools involve theft of personal property, such as gold jewelry, sheepskin coats,

and expensive sneakers, some schools are banning these items or instituting dress codes. In most schools, the idea of a dress code is warmly welcomed, mainly because kids are being killed for wearing the wrong color clothing. Gangs are identified by the color of their clothing, and innocent children are dying because of it (Bushweller 1993).

Violent kids experience violence at home and then bring what they have learned to school with them. Consequently, now some schools are beginning to offer counseling to students and their parents. The key, most agree, is reaching young people early and getting parents involved (Monagle 1991).

#### Independent and Dependent Variables

In this study, the dependent variable is school violence. The independent variables are presence of security guards, presence of metal detectors, gang presence, influence of mass media, family composition, student socioeconomic status, and antiviolence programs. The diagram in figure 1 illustrates the interaction of the variables used in the study.

In Baltimore, a middle school student shot an armed school policeman with a .22 caliber pistol as the officer struggled to arrest him. A janitor, who was nearby, jumped on the boy and helped handcuff him. The officer survived the attack (Bushweller 1993).

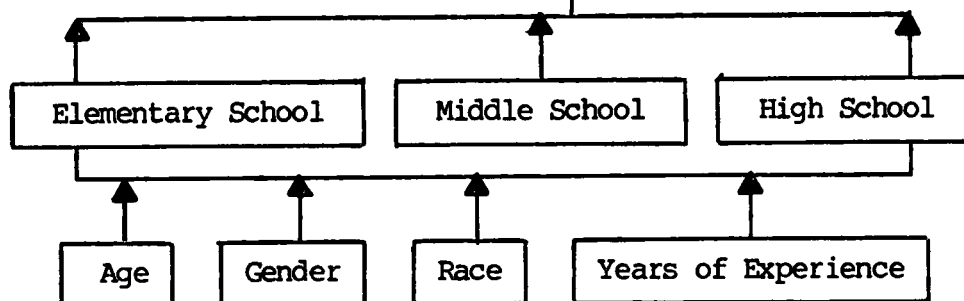
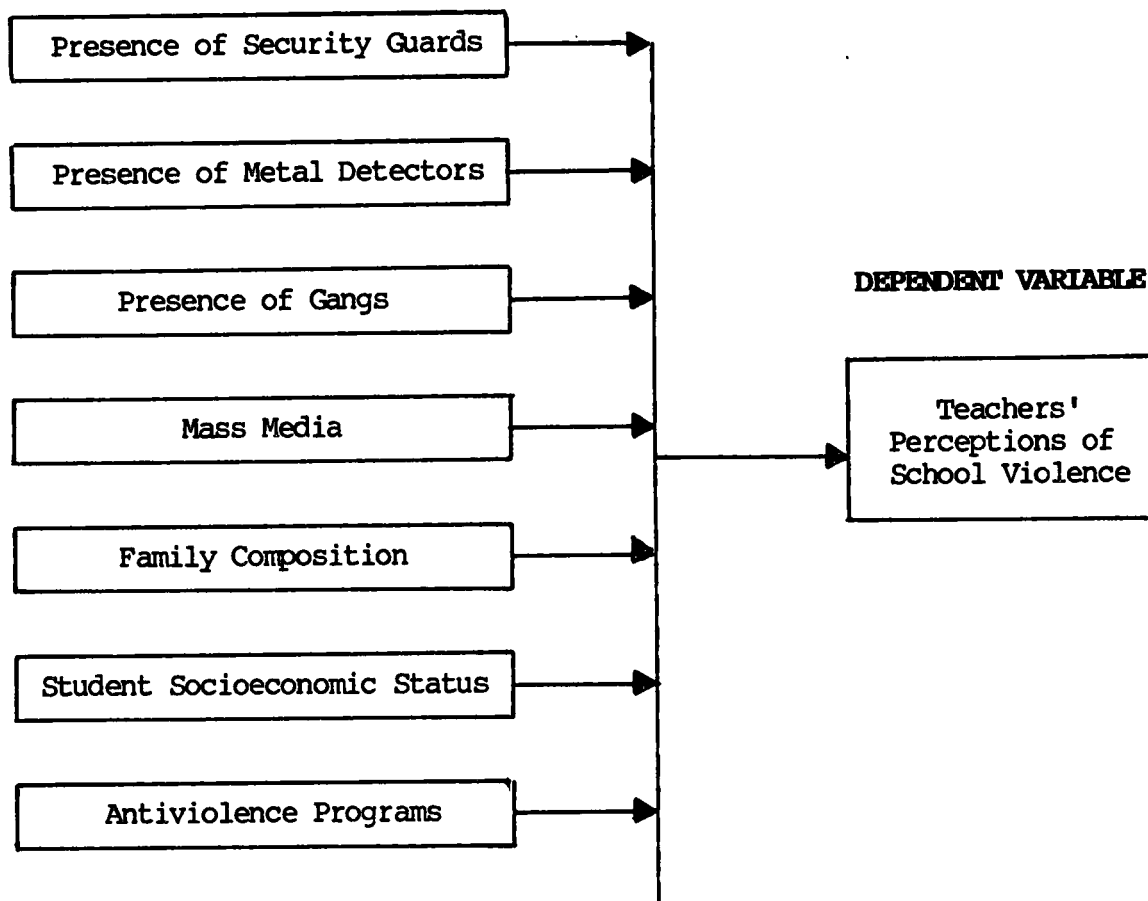
**MODEL OF VARIABLES****INDEPENDENT VARIABLES****MODERATOR VARIABLES**

Fig. 1. Model of Variables.

According to James (1993), across the country, kids are bringing everything from butcher knives and pellet guns to automatic pistols and sawed-off shotguns to school every day. Some do it just to impress their friends, and others actually use the weapons. Research has shown that bringing these weapons to school has increased the attacks on students, teachers, and administrators (Newton 1995). Whatever the motivation, the widespread use of weapons by teenagers has prompted forceful responses from school districts.

According to Herbert Graham, director of policy and administrator services for the Los Angeles Unified School District:

There's no debate here. Our officers are armed. It's a shame, but it is a necessary evil. We do not want to be in the situation where we have to confront an armed person without being armed (quoted in Bushweller 1993, 71).

The rising tide of violence is not limited to big cities. In Prince George's County, Maryland, a suburb bordering Washington, D.C., violence has quickly become a staple of life, both on the streets and in the schools (Sautter 1995). Last March, a sixteen-year-old boy walked into a chemistry class in a county high school, pulled a pistol out of his coat, and fired it at a student in the back of the room, missing him by inches (Geiger 1994).

With these incidents in mind, many school systems are looking for ways to combat and prevent violence in



schools. Some of the methods used are discussed in the following sections. The relationship of their effect on the perception of violence and safety is considered.

### Security Guards

According to the Office of the District Attorney (DA) of the County of Los Angeles (1995), the presence of security guards appeared to have worked in 1980. Gang violence fell sharply over the next four years. The office stated that specialization and interagency cooperation were the key elements of the response in 1980. Then, as now, the fiscal situation did not permit massive expenditures. Quite the contrary; this was an era of the first cutbacks in social services in the aftermath of Proposition 13. As a result, the new resources allocated to fight gang violence were modest at best. The resources were used primarily to create specialized violence units in Probation and the DA's Office, to strengthen antiviolence efforts in the Los Angeles Police Department, to build some links between intervention activities and law enforcement, and to establish regular communication and cooperation between agencies. In essence, the goal is to see the violence problem as a whole and to address it in a coherent way that makes the best use of existing resources.

In Prince George's County, Maryland, the school board has decided to use local police to secure school

grounds. The school board has armed teams of school police officers who respond to problems every day. The security officers based at these schools carry only handcuffs, mace, radios, and metal detectors, not guns. This school district has decided that having guards present on the school grounds would deter violence (Geiger 1994).

### Metal Detectors

Harrington-Lueker (1993) cited that a metal detector can cost up to \$10,000 per unit; with prices like this, metal detectors are among the most costly items a school system can purchase for its security arsenal. The question then becomes: Are the devices an effective way to curb school violence?

According to statistics from the National School Safety Center (1993), approximately one-quarter of the nation's big-city school systems currently use metal detectors to stem the flow of weapons into the schools. For example, the Dallas Independent School District has been using two stationary models of the devices since 1989 and added ten more airport style units to its security force after a fatal shooting at a Dallas high school (Molnar 1992).

Edward Muir, director of school safety for the United Federation of Teachers, said the schools which use detectors cite their symbolism for one thing: a single

metal detector serves as a concrete reminder that guns and other weapons do not belong on campus and that schools are ready to take steps to keep such weapons out. In other words, although metal detectors are not impregnable, they can act as a powerful deterrent (Harrington-Lueker 1992).

### Gang Influence

The influence of gangs is another variable literature suggests relates to violence. If there are gangs in a community, they will include students, and schools are always implicated in gang problems. Gang activity in school is often marked by the prominent display of certain colors and clothing by students, graffiti with distinctive symbols, elaborate handshakes, and conspicuous displays of expensive goods. The easiest way to identify gang presence is to ask students. They know of gangs long before teachers do, and some will brag about them (McEvoy 1990).

According to Gordon (1993), many measures schools and communities have taken to address gang problems have failed. Providing gangs with attractive alternatives to gang life such as job training and sports can involve building on present school programs. Such alternatives are important not only for those who might be attracted to gangs, but also for those seeking a way out of them. Opportunities in areas that take youth away from gangs

toward positive ends should be a high priority in school intervention.

### Family Composition

According to Zwirling (1993), the most important source of violence by and among children is family breakdown. He argued that more than 60 percent of all children born today will spend at least some time in a single-parent household before reaching age eighteen. He stated that this kind of collapse of family structure is historically unprecedented in the United States and possibly in the world. He cited a report by a child-welfare organization which stated that for many black teenagers, marriage is "now an almost forgotten institution."

Page (1995) cited two opposing views of why the decay of the family occurs. One side is the Charles Murray school, and they argue that perverse government policies lie behind the collapse of family responsibility. In opposition is what he called the Daniel Patrick Moynihan school, which argues that the causes are a mystery but probably involve culture and that government intervention offers the best hope for a solution. But despite the deep split over the causes and solutions, there is broad agreement that family disintegration is at the root of many of the social and economic problems that worry society.

According to Staples (1995), to say that the family structure is now the principal conduit of class structure is not to deny that plenty of children in intact families have problems, or that many youngsters from single-parent homes will grow up to be happy and successful. The point, as she stated, is that having only one parent's time, energy, earnings, and teaching power is a serious blow from which a child recovers only with effort. She pointed out that the lack of male direction is an additional problem for many such children.

Morrow (1994) concurred with Staples. He used a study conducted by the National Association of Elementary School Principals to substantiate his claims. He cited that the study found that 30 percent of the two-parent elementary school students surveyed ranked as high achievers, compared with only 17 percent of the one-parent children. At the other end of the scale, 23 percent of the two-parent children were low achievers, versus 38 percent of the one-parent children. The study also found that there were more clinic visits among one-parent students, and their rate of absence from school ran higher. One-parent students were consistently more likely to be late, truant, and subject to disciplinary action. Morrow also stated that one-parent children were found to be more than twice as likely to drop out of school altogether.

Denno (1994) cited the Bureau of Justice Statistics report which stated that in 1992, 70 percent of the juveniles in state reform institutions grew up in single-parent or no-parent families. The study found that of seventy-two adolescent murderers, three-quarters came from single-parent homes. It also showed that most street-gang members are from broken homes.

Given family integrity's essential importance, it might be expected to have society-wide efforts to support and encourage two-parent families when signs of rot were first detected. That did not happen. For the past quarter of a century, American public policy has shied away from the idea that certain family forms are more desirable than others.

#### Antiviolence Programs

According to the Eisenhower Foundation (1995), over twenty years ago, the bipartisan President's National Commission on Civil Disorders concluded, "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, one white--separate and unequal." Shortly thereafter, the bipartisan National Commission on Causes and Prevention of Violence, surveying the carnage in many American cities in the wake of the ghetto riots and rising crime rates of the late 1960s, concluded that "safety in our cities requires nothing less than progress in reconstructing urban life."

Nordland (1994) stated that community-based organizations can create effective strategies to reduce crime and drug abuse in inner cities. He argued that experience tells that these inner-city ills require comprehensive solutions, not piecemeal, hit-and-miss efforts. He stated that the most successful programs reach well beyond the immediate symptoms of crime or drug abuse to address the deeper problems of the surrounding community, and particularly the multiple needs of disadvantaged youth.

#### Influence of Mass Media

Amsler (1994) cited that ever since Senator Paul Simon (D-Ill.) turned on a hotel television set in 1985 and saw a movie in which a body was being dismembered with a chainsaw, he has been on a personal crusade to clean up violence on television. For several years he compiled mountains of research to give weight to his urgent message: that the alarming rise of violence in society can be directly linked to the rise of violence on television.

According to Davies (1993), the impact of violence in the media upon children and adolescents represents one of the most intensive areas of research. Again, because it is the most pervasive of all media, television has been the focus of most of this research. Davies cited a report by the National Institute of Mental Health which concluded that the research question was no longer whether but how violence

on television leads to aggressive behavior. The American Psychological Association (1985) acknowledged that televised violence can cause aggressive behavior.

Adolescents are a major target population for crime, with many of these crimes occurring in school. The popular media also contribute to a culture of violence that affects young adolescents. While the number of adolescents who become victims grows, so do the number of children who are committing crimes (Davies 1993).

### Definition of Variables

For the purpose of this study, the following variables are defined.

#### Dependent Variable

The dependent variable is teachers' perception of school violence. School violence is defined as physical force exerted for the purpose of violating, damaging, or abusing; chronic situations that result in injury to the psychological, social, or physical well-being of an individual or group that occur on the property of a school (Sautter 1995).

#### Independent Variables

The independent variables in this study are (1) presence of security guards, (2) presence of metal



detectors, (3) gang presence, (4) influence of mass media, (5) family composition, (6) student socioeconomic status, and (7) antiviolence programs.

1. Presence of security guards: Having armed police-like guards canvas school property, usually searching for guns, drugs, or other illegal objects; guards with dogs that randomly search students, lockers, and cars for illegal items that are brought to school.

2. Presence of metal detectors: Being searched by a device that finds any metal objects.

3. Gang influence: The presence of a group of criminals or hoodlums who band together for mutual protection and profit. The group is identified by the color of clothing they wear. They usually force kids to join them by promising protection from rival gangs.

4. Influence of mass media: The impact of watching violent television programs or movies; listening to music that promote violence; playing video games that involve violence without adult supervision; being influenced by violent acts such as stabbing, shooting, fighting and killing.

5. Family composition: Number of parents in the home (one or two); number of children in the home; a group of people who live in the same household and interact together.

6. Student socioeconomic status: Having to do with or involving factors that are both social and economic;

family income below poverty level of \$15,000 annually; lack of money due to lack of employment or low-paying employment; based on income and background (Amsler 1994).

7. Antiviolence programs: School programs such as conflict resolution and peer mediation that have been implemented to combat and prevent violence.

### Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were developed for this study:

Hypothesis 1: Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association between school violence and the presence of security guards.

Hypothesis 2: Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association between school violence and the presence of metal detectors.

Hypothesis 3: Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association between school violence and gang presence.

Hypothesis 4: Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association between school violence and mass media.

Hypothesis 5: Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association between school violence and family composition.

Hypothesis 6: Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association between school violence and student socioeconomic status.

Hypothesis 7: Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association between school violence and anti-violence programs.

Hypothesis 8: There is no difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of security guards according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience.

Hypothesis 9: There is no significant relationship between school violence and the presence of metal detectors as perceived by teachers according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience.

Hypothesis 10: There is no difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and gang presence according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience.

Hypothesis 11: There is no difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the influence of mass media according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience.

Hypothesis 12: There is no difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and family

composition according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience.

Hypothesis 13: There is no difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and student socioeconomic status according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience.

Hypothesis 14: There is no difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and antiviolence programs according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience.

#### Limitations of the Study

The conditions under which this investigation was conducted offered a number of limitations. Among the limitations are the following:

1. The results of this study are limited to teachers in selected elementary, middle, and high schools in the Atlanta Public Schools system. However, inference may be made to similar populations.

2. Participation in this study was voluntary, which may have affected the results.

3. The instrument is a self-rating scale; consequently, it is possible that certain items on the questionnaire may not have been responded to truthfully.

4. There was no way of ensuring honest responses by respondents.

5. Only a select number of variables considered to be related to school violence were chosen for study.

6. The sample may not fully represent all teachers in the Atlanta Public Schools system.

7. Based on the foregoing limitations, the findings of this study cannot be generalized and are specific to the population being studied.

### Summary

This chapter presented the theoretical framework of the study and identified the dependent, independent, and moderator variables that were used in this study. The dependent, independent, and moderator variables and other key terms were defined in this chapter. The hypotheses and limitations of the study were also identified.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESEARCH METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This chapter describes the methodology which was used in determining the relationship between teachers' perceptions of school violence and selected variables in a sample of elementary, middle, and high schools in the Atlanta Public Schools system. This chapter includes the research design, a description of the setting, sampling procedures, working with human subjects, a description of the instrument, data collection procedures, and statistical applications.

#### Research Design

This research was descriptive in nature and quantitative in design. A questionnaire was developed by the researcher to obtain responses to address the questions posed to guide this study. By identifying and explaining the relationship between the variables, one can rationalize and have better insight into and understanding of the factors that relate to school violence.

### Description of the Setting

This study was conducted in eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools in the Atlanta Public Schools system. The Atlanta school system is located in the inner perimeters of metropolitan Atlanta, which consists of Clayton, Cobb, Dekalb, Douglas, Fulton, and Gwinnett counties. The Atlanta Public Schools system is an inner-city public school system.

According to the Atlanta Public Schools Overview, in 1993-94 the total student enrollment in the City of Atlanta public schools was 61,850 students. The schools are divided into Grades K-5 elementary school, Grades 6-8 middle school, and Grades 9-12 high school.

Of the seventy-two elementary schools in the Atlanta Public Schools system, eight schools were used in this study; at the middle and high school levels, two schools each were used. These numbers represent approximately 10 percent of the total number of schools at each of these levels in the school system. Final selection of these schools was made in terms of high and low income classification based on their total number of free and reduced lunch participants.

The Atlanta Public Schools (APS) system employs 3,623 teachers. There are 2,082 elementary school teachers, 774 middle school teachers, and 767 high school teachers. Among the 2,082 elementary teachers, there are 1,650 black

teachers, 404 white teachers, 24 Hispanic teachers, and 4 Asian teachers. Among the black teachers, 1,523 are females and 127 are males, while among the white teachers, 353 are females and 51 are males. Among the Hispanic and Asian teachers, there are 6 Hispanic females and 18 Hispanic males, while the 4 Asian teachers are all females (APS 1996). Of these teachers, 383 elementary teachers were surveyed.

Among the 774 middle school teachers, 671 are black, 98 are white, 4 are Hispanic, and 1 is Asian. Among the black teachers, 508 are females and 163 are males, while among the white teachers, 73 are females and 25 are males. Among the five remaining teachers, there are two female and two male Hispanic teachers and one Asian teacher (APS 1996). Of these teachers, 113 middle school teachers were surveyed.

There are 767 high school teachers; 653 of them are black, 107 are white, 4 are Hispanic, and 3 are Asian. Among the black teachers, 444 are females and 209 are males, while among the white teachers, 54 are females and 53 are males. Among the Hispanic teachers, three are females and one is male. Among the Asian teachers, two are female and one is male (APS 1996). Of these teachers, 225 high school teachers were surveyed.

Table 1 shows the schools that were selected to be used in the study. The schools were divided into high and low income using the number of free and reduced lunch



Table 1.--Number of Teachers in Each School

School Type	Number of Teachers in Schools	Teachers Sampled
Elementary Schools:		
High Income		
Brandon	47	30
Jackson	40	19
Smith	39	26
Morningside	57	25
Low Income		
Tull Waters	58	25
Grove Park	54	29
F. L. Stanton	36	22
Daniel H. Stanton	52	28
Total	383	204
Middle Schools:		
High Income		
Inman	59	27
Low Income		
M. L. King	54	46
Total	113	73
High Schools:		
High Income		
Frederick Douglas	116	44
Low Income		
Southside Comprehensive	109	36
Total	225	80

participants. The table shows the number of teachers at each school selected. It also shows the total number of elementary, middle, and high school teachers that were used in the study.

### Sampling Procedures

The population for this study consisted of teachers who worked in elementary, middle, and high schools in the Atlanta Public Schools system. From the total number of these elementary, middle, and high schools, approximately 10 percent were selected.

Of the eight elementary schools selected, four were classified as high socioeconomic status (SES) and four as low SES. One each of the middle and high schools was classified as high SES, and one of each was classified as low SES. The sample was representative of the teaching population of the Atlanta Public Schools. Teachers in 10 percent of the schools at each level were used in the sample. The teachers who responded to this questionnaire were randomly selected, thereby making the subjects a random sample.

### Population

The population for this study consisted of teachers who worked in the Atlanta Public Schools. The SES of each school was obtained from a list through the Research and

Development Department in the Atlanta Public Schools system. The schools were divided into high and low SES groups based on the number of free and reduced lunches served.

Table 1 shows the schools used in the study and the total number of teachers who were currently employed at these schools. The table shows the school type and classifies the schools into high and low SES according to their total number of free and reduced lunch participants.

#### Working with Human Subjects

This study was conducted with the permission of the Atlanta Public Schools system. Subjects used in this study were informed that the collected data would be used in a dissertation, with individuals remaining anonymous and only group data being reported. The respondents' participation in the survey was voluntary, and the collected data were kept confidential. It was the hope of the researcher that these measures would set the respondents at ease and they would honestly and completely answer all questions.

#### Description of the Instrument

Because a single survey addressing all the variables as they were used in this study was not found, the instrument used in this study was developed by the researcher. The independent variables were placed on a single questionnaire. The independent variables assisted in measuring

violence in schools. Each variable requires a single answer to be indicated by a prescribed response mode. All items measuring school violence were developed by the researcher and validated by an expert panel.

Items measuring the variables in this study were developed after reviewing the literature and examining previously developed surveys of a similar nature. The draft was submitted to an expert panel for review to determine the appropriateness and clarity of the items as measures of the variables. Using this feedback, items were modified or deleted as necessary.

Table 2 gives a brief description of the items on the questionnaire as they measured the variables being investigated.

#### Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

According to Borg and Gall (1983), validity is achieved when the instrument measures the variable it is intended to measure. In order to achieve a standard of validity, the instrument which was developed was assessed by an expert panel of educators and pilot tested. To establish reliability of the instrument, an item-to-scale analysis was computed.

Table 2.--Questionnaire Items Related to the Variables

Variable	Measurement	Item #
1. Age	Chronological age attained at last birthday	1
2. Gender	Male or female	2
3. Race	A group linked by nationality	3
4. School type	Level of grade taught	4
5. Years of experience	Number of years teaching	5-7
6. Staff development/ violence related training	Knowledge of and courses attended in school violence	8-9
7. Security guards	Presence and effect of security guards on school grounds	10-15
8. Metal detectors	Presence and effect of metal detectors on school grounds	16-20
9. Gangs	Presence and influence of gangs in school violence	21-23
10. Mass media	Influence of television, videos, music, and video games on violence perpetration	29-34
11. Student family composition	Make-up of the students' family	35-40
12. Student socioeconomic status	Income and professional level of the students' parents	24-28
13. Antiviolence programs	Formal violence intervention strategies and activities in the schools	44-48

### Data Collection Procedures

Questionnaires were taken to the eight elementary, two middle, and two high schools for administrators and teachers. Respondents were informed that their survey results would be used to help determine teachers' perceptions of variables that contribute to violence. A target person, preferably the principal, was selected at each school to monitor the distribution of the questionnaires. The instrument was duplicated on colored paper (white, red, yellow, pink, green, purple, orange, and blue) for each of the elementary schools selected. In the case of the middle schools, questionnaires were printed on brown and tan colored paper; and for the high schools, magenta and light blue colored paper were used. The instrument was color coded and taken to the schools. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was provided to mail results back to the researcher. The participants were assured that only group data would be reported, not individual or school data.

### Statistical Applications

Preceding the collection of data, the questionnaires were coded by schools. After the questionnaires were returned, the response data were subjected to statistical analyses. As the study analyzed relationships between two or more variables, the Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used. In addition to this, a wide range of descriptive

statistics including means and percentages were used to facilitate more comprehensive analysis and presentation of data. The level of significance for accepting or rejecting the hypotheses was set at the .05 level.

### Summary

This chapter examined the methods and procedures utilized in determining teachers' perceptions of variables which affect school violence in selected schools in the Atlanta Public Schools system, including: (1) demographic variables of age, gender, race, school type, and years of experience of teachers; (2) staff development/college courses taken; (3) presence of security guards; (4) presence of metal detectors; (5) influence of gangs; (6) influence of mass media; (7) student family composition; (8) student socioeconomic status; and (9) antiviolence programs. Demographic data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, and analysis in terms of the relationship between variables was conducted through the analysis of variance.

## CHAPTER V

### ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

In this chapter, an analysis of the data obtained from surveys administered to teachers in elementary, middle and high schools in the Atlanta Public Schools System is presented. The surveys solicited responses of the teachers' perceptions of the association between school violence and selected independent variables in the Atlanta Public Schools system.

The purpose of this study was to determine through empirical means teachers' perceptions of factors associated with school violence. Figure 1 in Chapter III displayed the association among the variables. The instrument used to generate data for this research was a 48-item questionnaire developed by the researcher and validated by a panel of experts.

The survey instrument was divided into two parts: Part A solicited demographic information, while Part B solicited responses to the survey items measuring the variable associations investigated. A Likert-type scaling



procedure was used for the second part (Part B) of the survey. Eight elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools participated in this research. There were 624 questionnaires distributed to selected schools in the Atlanta Public Schools system. A total of 357 properly completed questionnaires were received from the participants. This represents a response rate of approximately 57 percent. The data obtained from the surveys are presented in two sections. The first section presents personal demographics, and the second section analyzes results in terms of the research questions and hypotheses presented in Chapters I and III, respectively. The following were the fourteen research questions posed:

1. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and the presence of security guards?
2. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and the presence of metal detectors?
3. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and the presence of gangs?
4. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and mass media?

5. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and student family composition?

6. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and student socio-economic status?

7. Do teachers in public schools perceive an association between school violence and antiviolence programs?

8. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of security guards according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

9. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of metal detectors according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

10. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and gang presence according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

11. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the influence of mass media according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

12. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and student family composition according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

13. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and student socioeconomic status according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

14. Is there a difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and antiviolence programs according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience?

#### Demographic Data

Table 3 displays demographic data relative to teachers in the Atlanta Public Schools system.

Demographic data are presented in terms of each participating teacher and then for the sample as a whole. A total of 2 or .6 percent of the teachers were 20 years old or younger. It is highly unlikely but not unrealistic for students to have completed college and secured a teaching position before the age of 20. Therefore, this category was included to discover if any teachers in the Atlanta Public Schools were under the age of 20. Most of the teachers who responded were between the ages of 30 and 49. Further

Table 3.--Demographics of Research Sample ( $n = 357$ )

Variable	$n$	%	% Total
Age:			
Below 20	2	.6	1.2
20-29	66	18.5	21.7
30-39	95	26.6	51.2
40-49	79	22.1	75.8
Over 49	78	21.8	100.0
No response	37	10.4	
Total	357	100.0	
Gender:			
Female	275	77.0	84.9
Male	49	13.7	100.0
No response	33	9.3	
Total	357	100.0	
Race:			
African American	218	61.1	67.4
Asian	5	1.4	68.9
Caucasian	96	26.9	98.5
Hispanic	1	.3	98.8
Other	4	1.1	100.0
No response	33	9.3	
Total	357	100.0	
School Type:			
Elementary School	218	61.3	65.6
Middle School	50	14.0	80.5
High School	65	18.3	100.0
No response	24	6.7	
Years of Teaching Experience in Atlanta Public Schools:			
0-5	99	27.7	30.0
5-10	75	21.0	52.6
10-15	48	13.4	67.0
15-20	22	6.2	73.6
Over 20	88	24.6	100.0
No response	25	7.0	

Table 3--Continued

Variable	<u>n</u>	%	% Total
Number of Years at Present School:			
0-5	143	40.1	43.8
5-10	85	23.8	69.6
10-15	64	17.9	89.1
15-20	12	3.4	92.7
Over 20	24	6.7	100.0
No response	29	8.1	
Total Years Teaching:			
0-5	84	23.5	25.1
5-10	66	18.5	44.8
10-15	56	15.7	61.5
15-20	24	6.7	68.7
Over 20	105	29.4	100.0
No response	22	6.2	
Previous Courses Taken:			
None	77	21.6	23.3
1-2	163	45.7	72.7
3-4	63	17.6	91.8
4-5	19	5.3	97.6
More than 5	8	2.2	100.0
No response	27	7.6	
Staff Development Courses Last Taken:			
1-3 years ago	155	43.4	47.8
3-5 years ago	54	15.1	64.5
5-8 years ago	10	2.8	67.6
Over 8 years	10	2.8	70.7
None	95	26.6	100.0
No response	33	9.2	

analysis of the data in table 3 shows that a total of 275 or 77.0 percent of the participants were female, while 49 or 13.8 percent were male. There were significantly more female teachers than male teachers who responded to the survey. This is reflective of the population of teachers in the Atlanta Public Schools system.

Of the 357 respondents of the survey, 218 or 61.1 were African American. African American teachers represent the majority of the population of the Atlanta Public Schools teachers. In terms of school type, 218 or 61.1 percent of the respondents teach in elementary schools. According to the demographics of APS, there are significantly more elementary school teachers than middle or high school teachers, and there are also more elementary schools than any other school type.

Of the 357 participants, 99 or 27.7 percent of the teachers had zero to five years of teaching experience in Atlanta Public Schools; 75 or 21.0 percent had five to ten years of teaching experience in APS, while 88 or 24.6 percent had over twenty years of experience teaching in the Atlanta Public Schools. Most of the teachers who responded had zero to five years of experience in Atlanta Public Schools.

In terms of total years of teaching experience, 84 or 23.5 percent of the teachers had zero to five years of total teaching experience, while 105 or 29.4 percent had

over twenty years of total teaching experience. Twenty-two teachers or 6.2 percent declined a response to this question. Most of the teachers who responded to this questionnaire had over twenty years of total teaching experience.

When analyzing the number of violence prevention courses, seminars, or workshops participants had taken within the last five years, 163 or 45.7 percent had taken one to two courses. A larger number of teachers had taken one to two violence prevention courses, seminars, or workshops within the last five years. In terms of analyzing when the respondents last took a school violence college or staff development course, 155 or 43.4 percent had taken a course within one to three years preceeding the survey, which means that almost half of the respondents are aware of the importance of school violence issues.

Table 4 shows the percentage of the total responses to the seven independent variables by categories.

Teachers' responses to the seven independent variables were analyzed by cumulative percentages. The data in table 4 indicate that most teachers perceive that school violence is clearly most influenced by student socioeconomic status and family composition. These two factors are factors which are not under the control of the students or the school.

Table 4.--Teachers' Responses to the Association Between School Violence and Selected Independent Variables ( $n = 357$ )

Variables	Never	Sometimes	Often	Always/ Very Often
Presence of Security Guards	7%	36%	44%	13%
Presence of Metal Detectors	49%	51%	0%	0%
Presence of Gangs	12%	36%	38%	14%
Mass Media	12%	39%	48%	1%
Family Composition	6%	14%	68%	12%
Student Socioeconomic Status	6%	12%	73%	9%
Antiviolence Programs	14%	47%	37%	3%

Table 5 shows the analysis of variance of teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and security guards in terms of demographic data. The highest possible score on responses to these questions was 4.0000. Analysis of responses in terms of age yielded an  $F$  probability of .5829, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of security guards and school violence in terms of their age. Because of this result, Hypothesis 8a is accepted. The mean score of 2.1784 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to items relating to this variable.



Table 5.--ANOVA of Teachers' Responses on the Association of School Violence and Security Guards in Terms of Demographic Data

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean	Mean Squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
<u>Age:</u>						
Between Groups	4	1.2645	2.1784	.3161	.7139	.5829
Within Groups	315	139.4767		.4428		
Total	319	140.7412				
<u>Gender:</u>						
Between Groups	1	.8330	2.1748	.8330	1.9294	.1658
Within Groups	320	138.1533		.4317		
Total	321	138.9862				
<u>Race:</u>						
Between Groups	4	13.7714	2.1877	3.4429	8.5085	.0000
Within Groups	319	129.0792		.4046		
Total	323	142.8506				
<u>School Type:</u>						
Between Groups	2	26.0841	2.1691	13.0421	37.2661	.0000
Within Groups	327	114.4406		.3500		
Total	329	140.5247				
<u>Years of Experience:</u>						
Between Groups	4	2.8156	2.1768	.7039	1.6205	.1687
Within Groups	327	142.0358		.4344		
Total	331	144.8514				

Given the data on gender, an F probability of .1658 was yielded, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of security guards and school

violence in terms of their gender. Consequently, Hypothesis 8b is accepted. The mean score of 2.1748 indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to the items relating to this variable.

In addition, the results of the data on race yielded an  $F$  probability of .0000, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of security guards and school violence according to their race. Based on the results of the data, Hypothesis 8c is not accepted. Table 5 shows the mean score of 2.1877, indicating that the majority of teachers responded favorably to items relating to this variable.

When examining the data on school type, it was noted that the  $F$  probability yielded the same results as the data on race (.0000), which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of security guards and school violence in terms of their school type. Using the results of these data, Hypothesis 8d is not accepted. Table 5 displays a mean score of 2.1691, which indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to the items relating to this variable.

The outcome of the data on years of experience revealed an  $F$  probability of .1977, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant

difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of security guards and school violence in terms of their years of experience. This being the case, Hypothesis 8e is accepted. Table 5 disclosed a mean score of 2.1899, which indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to the items relating to this variable.

In summarizing table 5, school type and race were the significant factors when analyzing teachers' perceptions of the association of security guards by demographic data. School type was the most significant factor of the analysis of variables associated with school violence. This implies that elementary, middle, and high school teachers had very different perceptions of school violence.

The reason for this nonstatistical significance may be due to the fact that elementary schools do not have security guards on the premises; therefore, teachers in elementary schools may not be familiar with the influence of security guards in deterring violence in schools. It was also noted that the majority of teachers who responded to the survey were from elementary schools.

Table 6 shows the analysis of variance of teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and metal detectors according to demographic data.

The results from the analysis of data on age yielded an F probability of .4094, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in

Table 6.--ANOVA of Teachers' Responses on the Association of School Violence and Metal Detectors in Terms of Demographic Data

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean	Mean Squares	<u>F</u> Ratio	<u>F</u> Prob.
<u>Age:</u>						
Between Groups	4	.3671	1.0100	.0918	.9969	.4094
Within Groups	315	29.0034		.0921		
Total	319	29.3706				
<u>Gender:</u>						
Between Groups	1	.3333	1.0033	.3333	3.8274	.0513
Within Groups	320	27.8625		.0871		
Total	321	28.1957				
<u>Race:</u>						
Between Groups	4	3.6766	1.0096	.9192	11.4266	.0000
Within Groups	319	25.6604		.0804		
Total	323	29.3370				
<u>School Type:</u>						
Between Groups	2	8.0489	1.0036	4.0244	65.1710	.0000
Within Groups	327	20.1929		.0618		
Total	329	28.2418				
<u>Years of Experience:</u>						
Between Groups	4	.4908	1.0088	.1227	1.3778	.2413
Within Groups	327	29.1199		.0891		
Total	331	29.6107				

teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and metal detectors according to their age. The mean score of 1.0100 indicates that the majority of the teachers gave

the lowest score possible in responding to items relating to this variable.

In addition, the analysis of data on gender yielded an  $F$  probability of .0513, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and metal detectors according to their gender. The mean score of 1.0033 indicates that the majority of the teachers gave the lowest score possible in responding to items relating to this variable.

Analysis of data on race yielded an  $F$  probability of .0000, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and metal detectors according to their race. The mean score of 1.0096 indicates that the majority of teachers gave the lowest score possible in responding to items relating to this variable.

When analyzing the data on school type, the  $F$  probability yielded a value of .0000, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and metal detectors according to their school type. The mean score of 1.0036 indicates that the majority of teachers gave the lowest score possible in responding to items relating to this variable.

In addition, the analysis of data on years of experience yielded a F probability of .2413, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and metal detectors according to years of experience. The mean score of 1.0088 indicates that the majority of teachers gave the lowest score possible in responding to items relating to this variable.

When summarizing the data gathered in table 6, race and school type were the significant demographic variables found. This implies that teachers' perceptions of school violence varied by the different races and school types.

Table 7 shows the analysis of variance of teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and gang presence according to demographic data.

Analysis of data on age yielded an F probability of .0310, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and gang presence according to their age. The mean score of 2.8484 indicates that the majority of the teachers responded somewhat favorably to items relating to this variable.

The analysis of data on gender yielded an F probability of .8384, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence

Table 7.--ANOVA of Teachers' Responses on the Association of School Violence and Gang Presence in Terms of Demographic Data

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean	Mean Squares	<u>F</u> Ratio	<u>F</u> Prob.
<u>Age:</u>						
Between Groups	4	5.8372	2.8484	1.4593	2.6951	.0310
Within Groups	315	170.5621		.5415		
Total	319	176.3993				
<u>Gender:</u>						
Between Groups	1	.0234	2.8517	.0234	.0417	.8384
Within Groups	320	179.9581		.5624		
Total	321	179.9816				
<u>Race:</u>						
Between Groups	4	3.7666	2.8495	.9416	1.7144	.1465
Within Groups	319	175.2109		.5493		
Total	323	178.9774				
<u>School Type:</u>						
Between Groups	2	3.4212	2.8447	1.7106	3.1284	.0451
Within Groups	327	178.8070		.5456		
Total	329	182.2282				
<u>Years of Experience:</u>						
Between Groups	4	4.7772	2.8509	1.1943	2.2022	.0685
Within Groups	327	177.3425		.5423		
Total	331	182.1197				

and gang presence according to their gender. The mean score of 2.8517 indicates that the majority of teachers responded somewhat favorably to items relating to this variable.

The results of the analysis of data on race yielded an F probability of .1465, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and gang presence according to their race. The mean score of 2.8495 indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to the items relating to this variable.

In addition, the analysis of data on school type yielded an F probability of .0451, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and gang presence according to their school type. The mean score of 2.8447 indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to items relating to this variable.

Analysis of data on years of experience yielded an F probability of .0685, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and gang presence according to their years of experience. The mean score of 2.8509 indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to items relating to this variable.

The summary of table 7 disclosed race and school type as factors that are significant when analyzing teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence



and gang presence. This suggests that teachers in various school types and of diverse races perceive school violence differently.

Table 8 shows the analysis of variance of teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student socioeconomic status according to demographic data.

Analysis of data on age yielded an  $F$  probability of .0017, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student socioeconomic status according to their age. The mean score of 2.2875 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to items relating to this variable.

The analysis of data on gender yielded an  $F$  probability of .1210, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student socioeconomic status according to their gender. The mean score of 2.2899 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to the items relating to this variable.

The results of the analysis of data on race yielded an  $F$  probability of .1553, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student socioeconomic status according to their race.

Table 8.--ANOVA of Teachers' Responses on the Association of School Violence and Student Socioeconomic Status in Terms of Demographic Data

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean	Mean Squares	<u>F</u> Ratio	<u>F</u> Prob.
<u>Age:</u>						
Between Groups	4	3.7952	2.2875	.9488	4.4384	.0017
Within Groups	315	67.3381		.2138		
Total	319	71.1333				
<u>Gender:</u>						
Between Groups	1	.5333	2.2899	.5333	2.4166	.1210
Within Groups	320	70.6219		.2207		
Total	321	71.1552				
<u>Race:</u>						
Between Groups	4	1.4446	2.2829	.3612	1.6758	.1553
Within Groups	319	68.7459		.2155		
Total	323	70.1905				
<u>School Type:</u>						
Between Groups	2	1.5147	2.2977	.7573	3.4621	.0325
Within Groups	327	71.5322		.2188		
Total	329	73.0469				
<u>Years of Experience:</u>						
Between Groups	4	2.4562	2.2949	.6141	2.8723	.0231
Within Groups	327	69.9083		.2138		
Total	331	72.3645				

The mean score of 2.2829 indicates that the majority of teachers responded somewhat unfavorably to the items relating to this variable.

When analyzing the data on school type, an F probability of .0325 was yielded, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student socioeconomic status according to their school type. The mean score of 2.2977 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to the items relating to this variable.

In addition, the analysis of data on years of experience yielded an F probability of .0231, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student socioeconomic status according to their years of experience. The mean score of 2.2949 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to items relating to this variable.

In summarizing table 8, the age of the teachers was significant when analyzing teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student socioeconomic status. This suggests that teachers of diverse ages perceived school violence differently.

Table 9 shows the analysis of variance of teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student family composition according to demographic data.

Analysis of data on age yielded an F probability of .0017, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There

Table 9.--ANOVA of Teachers' Responses on the Association of School Violence and Student Family Composition in Terms of Demographic Data

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean	Mean Squares	<u>F</u> Ratio	<u>F</u> Prob.
<u>Age:</u>						
Between Groups	4	6.0194	2.2365	1.5048	5.8050	.0017
Within Groups	315	81.6581		.2592		
Total	319	87.6774				
<u>Gender:</u>						
Between Groups	1	.7005	2.2329	.7005	2.7219	.1000
Within Groups	320	82.3583		.2574		
Total	321	83.0588				
<u>Race:</u>						
Between Groups	4	4.2846	2.2335	1.0711	4.1023	.0030
Within Groups	319	83.2943		.2611		
Total	323	87.5789				
<u>School Type:</u>						
Between Groups	2	4.7420	2.2422	2.3710	9.6120	.0001
Within Groups	327	80.6614		.2467		
Total	329	85.4034				
<u>Years of Experience:</u>						
Between Groups	4	4.5539	2.2437	1.1385	4.3693	.0019
Within Groups	327	85.2039		.2606		
Total	331	89.7578				

was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student family composition according to their years of experience. The mean score of 2.2365 indicates that the majority of

teachers responded unfavorably to items relating to this variable.

The analysis of data on gender yielded an  $F$  probability of .1000, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student family composition according to their gender. The mean score of 2.2329 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to the items relating to this variable.

When analyzing the data on race, an  $F$  probability of .0030 was yielded, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student family composition according to their race. The mean score of 2.2335 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to the items relating to this variable.

In addition, the analysis of data on school type yielded an  $F$  probability of .0001, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student family composition according to their school type. The mean score of 2.2422 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to the items relating to this variable.

When analyzing the data on years of experience, an F probability of .0019 was yielded, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and student family composition according to their years of experience. The mean score of 2.2437 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to items relating to this variable.

In summarizing table 9, race, age, school type, and years of experience were significant factors in analyzing the association of school violence and student family composition. This suggests that teachers of different races, ages, school types, and years of experience perceive school violence and student family composition differently.

Table 10 shows the analysis of variance of teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and anti-violence programs according to their demographic data.

Analysis of data on age yielded an F probability of .0232, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and anti-violence programs according to their age. The mean score of 2.4578 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to items relating to this variable.

The results of the analysis of data on gender yielded an F probability of .4013, which is lower than the

Table 10.--ANOVA of Teachers' Responses on the Association of School Violence and Antiviolence Programs in Terms of Demographic Data

Source	<u>df</u>	Sum of Squares	Mean	Mean Squares	<u>F</u> Ratio	<u>F</u> Prob.
<u>Age:</u>						
Between Groups	4	5.2281	2.4578	1.3070	2.8725	.0232
Within Groups	315	143.3274		.4550		
Total	319	148.5555				
<u>Gender:</u>						
Between Groups	1	.3212	2.4449	.3212	.7064	.4013
Within Groups	320	145.5128		.4547		
Total	321	145.8340				
<u>Race:</u>						
Between Groups	4	4.5829	2.4537	1.1457	2.5298	.0405
Within Groups	319	144.4726		.4529		
Total	323	149.0556				
<u>School Type:</u>						
Between Groups	2	2.7690	2.4462	1.3845	3.1285	.0451
Within Groups	327	144.7137		.4425		
Total	329	147.4828				
<u>Years of Experience:</u>						
Between Groups	4	6.3685	2.4533	1.5921	32.5990	.0069
Within Groups	327	144.6578		.4424		
Total	331	151.0264				

accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and antiviolence programs according to their gender. The mean score of 2.4449 indicates that the

majority of teachers responded unfavorably to the items relating to this variable.

When analyzing the data on race, an F probability of .0405 was yielded, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and antiviolence programs according to their race. The mean score of 2.4537 indicates that the majority of teachers responded somewhat unfavorably to the items relating to this variable.

In addition, the analysis of data on school type yielded an F probability of .0451, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and antiviolence programs according to their school type. The mean score of 2.4462 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to the items relating to this variable.

The analysis of data on years of experience yielded an F probability of .0069, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and antiviolence programs according to their years of experience. The mean score of 2.4533 indicates that the majority of teachers responded unfavorably to items relating to this variable.



Years of experience was the significant factor found when analyzing the data of the association of school violence and antiviolence programs. This implies that teachers of various years of experience perceive school violence and antiviolence programs differently.

Table 11 shows the analysis of variance of teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and the influence of mass media according to demographic data.

Analysis of data on age yielded an  $F$  probability of .7435, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and mass media according to their years of experience. The mean score of 2.7490 indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to the items relating to this variable.

The analysis of data on gender yielded an  $F$  probability of .4719, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and mass media according to their gender. The mean score of 2.7453 indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to the items relating to this variable.

In addition, the analysis of data on race yielded an  $F$  probability of .0004, which is higher than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore a significant difference in

Table 11.--ANOVA of Teachers' Responses on the Association of School Violence and the Influence of Mass Media in Terms of Demographic Data

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean	Mean Squares	F Ratio	F Prob.
<u>Age:</u>						
Between Groups	4	.7392	2.7490	.1848	.4894	.7435
Within Groups	315	118.9272		.3775		
Total	319	119.6663				
<u>Gender:</u>						
Between Groups	1	.1956	2.7453	.1956	.5187	.4719
Within Groups	320	120.7002		.3772		
Total	321	120.8958				
<u>Race:</u>						
Between Groups	4	7.5291	2.7495	1.8823	5.3400	.0004
Within Groups	319	112.4431		.3525		
Total	323	119.9721				
<u>School Type:</u>						
Between Groups	2	.5596	2.7485	.2798	.7571	.4698
Within Groups	327	120.8424		.3695		
Total	329	121.4020				
<u>Years of Experience:</u>						
Between Groups	4	2.2608	2.7510	.5652	1.5496	.1876
Within Groups	327	119.2667		.3647		
Total	331	121.5274				

teachers' perceptions of the association of mass media and school violence. The mean score of 2.7495 indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to the items relating to this variable.

The results of the analysis of data on school type yielded an  $F$  probability of .4698, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of mass media and school violence. The mean score of 2.7485 indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to the items relating to this variable.

When analyzing the data on years of experience, an  $F$  probability of .1876 was yielded, which is lower than the accepted .05 level. There was therefore no significant difference in teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and mass media according to their years of experience. The mean score of 2.7510 indicates that the majority of teachers responded favorably to items relating to this variable.

Race was the factor that was significant when analyzing the data of teachers' perceptions of the association of school violence and mass media. This implies that teachers of diverse races perceive school violence differently.

To summarize the data of the analysis of variance of school violence and the selected independent variables using demographic data, it was revealed that age was significant in two of the seven tables, gender was significant in one of the seven tables, race was significant in four of the seven tables, school type was significant in three of the seven

tables, and years of experience was significant in three of the seven tables. This suggests that race, school type, and years of experience were the factors that were overwhelmingly significant in teachers' perceptions of school violence.

### Summary

Teachers in the selected Atlanta Public Schools were provided an opportunity to participate in the research. The data obtained from the survey were presented in two sections. The first section presented demographics on respondents in terms of knowledge of school violence, while the second section analyzed results in terms of the hypotheses. Data revealed very little overall differences among the teachers in terms of demographics. The analysis of variance for the connection of school violence and selected independent variables outlined the significant variables which were located in tables 5-11.

CHAPTER VI  
FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS,  
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to investigate the association between school violence and selected variables through empirical means in selected elementary, middle, and high schools in the Atlanta Public Schools system. Related literature on the topic was examined. Seven of the identified variables which were found to be related to teachers' perceptions were selected. A questionnaire was developed to gather data on the extent to which teachers perceive an association between these variables and school violence. Through descriptive statistics, the data collected were presented and analyzed and the association between the dependent and independent variables was established.

Findings

The answers to Research Questions 1-14 are reflected and addressed through Hypotheses 1-14. Findings are summarized by discussion of each of the independent variables as they relate to the dependent variables: (1) presence of

security guards, (2) presence of metal detectors, (3) gang presence, (4) influence of mass media, (5) students' family composition, (6) students' socioeconomic status, and (7) antiviolence programs.

The following findings emerged as a result of testing the fourteen hypotheses of this study using the analysis of variance techniques:

1. Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association exists between school violence and the presence of security guards.

2. Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association exists between school violence and the presence of metal detectors.

3. Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association exists between school violence and the presence of gangs.

4. Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association exists between school violence and the mass media.

5. Teachers in public schools do perceive an association exists between school violence and students' family composition.

6. Teachers in public schools do perceive an association exists between school violence and students' socioeconomic status.

7. Teachers in public schools do not perceive an association exists between school violence and antiviolence programs.

8. There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of security guards according to their (a) age, (b) gender, and (e) years of experience.

8a. There was a significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of security guards according to their (c) race and (d) school type.

9. There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of metal detectors according to their (a) age and (e) years of experience.

9a. There was a significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of metal detectors according to their (b) gender, (c) race, and (d) school type.

10. There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of gangs according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, and (d) school type.

10a. There was a significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the presence of gangs according to their (e) years of experience.

11. There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and student socioeconomic status according to their (b) gender, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience.

11a. There was a significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and student socioeconomic status according to their (a) age.

12. There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and student family composition according to their (b) gender.

12a. There was a significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and student family composition according to their (a) age, (c) race, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience.

13. There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and antiviolence programs according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (c) race, and (d) school type.

13a. There was a significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and antiviolence programs according to their (e) years of experience.

14. There was no significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the influence of mass media according to their (a) age, (b) gender, (d) school type, and (e) years of experience.



14a. There was a significant difference in the perception of teachers on school violence and the influence of mass media according to their (c) race.

### Conclusions

From the findings of this study, most of the variables that were expected to be perceived as contributing to school violence were found to have no significant relationship for this sample. There were three variables that emerged as having a significant connection with school violence: student family composition, student socioeconomic status, and antiviolence programs. Race was found to be the most significant factor when analyzing the data according to the significant difference of school violence and selected independent variables. The results of this study could have been attributed to the nature of the study. The racial composition of the respondents could have affected the study. The composition of the sample was 61 percent African American teachers in the Atlanta Public Schools system, with the sample containing 26 percent white and fewer than 3 percent Asian and Hispanic teachers. The results were also limited to certified teachers and included no administrators or classified personnel, which may have affected the results. However, this was an accurate sample of the total population of teachers.

### Implications

Results of the findings hold serious implications for school administrators as they seek to address school violence. Teachers perceive an association between school violence and student family composition. This implies that teachers perceive students from various family composition are likely to participate in school violence. Teachers perceive an association between school violence and student socioeconomic status. This implies that teachers perceive students from low income families are likely to participate in school violence. Teachers perceive an association between school violence and antiviolence programs. This implies that teachers perceive antiviolent programs do not deter violence in schools.

There was a significant difference in the perceptions of teachers on school violence and the presence of security guards according to their age and years of experience. This implies that teachers of different ages and years of experience perceive the presence of security guards on school violence differently. Teachers perceive a sense of safety in school when security guards are present. There was a significant difference in the perceptions of teachers on school violence and the presence of metal detectors according to their gender, race, and school type. This implies that teachers of different gender, race, and school type perceive the presence of metal detectors on school

violence differently. There was a significant difference in the perceptions of teachers on school violence and gang presence according to their years of experience. This implies that teachers may have different expectations for these students and that they may teach them differently and also discipline them differently.

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are made based on the findings and conclusions drawn from this research:

1. Programs should be developed to educate parents, teachers, students, and school administrators about gang paraphernalia and indicators of their presence.
2. Further research should be conducted to discover which schools are in need of security guards and metal detectors.
3. Teachers should be encouraged to participate in violence prevention programs.
4. Administrators, teachers, parents, and community leaders should be encouraged to develop programs to prevent school violence.
5. All schools should have security guards present.

### Summary

The findings of this study were summarized and conclusions were reported based on the findings. The

implications discussed were based on the conclusions of the study, and recommendations were made for research and practice. There were significant connections between teachers' perceptions of school violence and student family composition, student socioeconomic status, and antiviolence programs.

With school violence being a major issue in schools, the recommendations of this study will be useful in assisting teachers, administrators, parents, and community leaders to encourage positive behavior to help combat the negative behavior of students. The involvement of positive community leaders as role models and big brothers for the students should become a part of all the schools (elementary, middle, and high). If schools are to provide a quality education and a safe environment for students, they must have programs that will teach the social skills and problem-solving skills that many of them are lacking. Schools must target parents as well and educate them on the importance of living violence free. Schools must also provide counseling and violence prevention and intervention programs for parents.

## APPENDIX

### SCHOOL VIOLENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please take a few minutes to complete this form. The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information about school violence and factors which might affect violence. You are **not** required to place your name on the questionnaire. However, you are asked to answer each question honestly. Thank you for your cooperation.

#### Directions

1. Do **not** write your name or your school's name.
2. Complete all questions.
3. Choose only one answer for each question.
4. Circle your choice.

**Please circle the most appropriate response.**

1. Age:
  - (a) below 20
  - (b) 20-29
  - (c) 30-39
  - (d) 40-49
  - (e) over 49
2. Gender:
  - (a) Female
  - (b) Male
3. Race:
  - (a) African American
  - (b) Asian
  - (c) Caucasian
  - (d) Hispanic
  - (e) Other
4. School type
  - (a) Elementary school
  - (b) Middle school
  - (c) High school

5. Years of Teaching Experience in Atlanta Public Schools  
(a) 0-5  
(b) 5-10  
(c) 10-15  
(d) 15-20  
(e) over 20
6. Number of years at your present school:  
(a) 0-5  
(b) 5-10  
(c) 10-15  
(d) 15-20  
(e) over 20
7. Total years teaching:  
(a) 0-5  
(b) 5-10  
(c) 10-15  
(d) 15-20  
(e) over 20
8. Within the last five years, how many violence prevention courses/seminars/workshops have you attended?  
(a) none  
(b) 1-2  
(c) 3-4  
(d) 4-5  
(e) more than 5
9. When did you last take a college/staff development course in school violence/violence prevention?  
(a) 1-3 yrs ago  
(b) 3-5 yrs ago  
(c) 5-8 yrs ago  
(d) over 8 yrs  
(e) none
10. Are there security guards in your school?
- |       |           |       |        |
|-------|-----------|-------|--------|
| Never | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| 1     | 2         | 3     | 4      |
11. Do you think the presence of security guards makes you/ would make you feel safe in your school?
- |       |           |       |        |
|-------|-----------|-------|--------|
| Never | Sometimes | Often | Always |
| 1     | 2         | 3     | 4      |

12. Do you think the presence of security guards enhances/  
would enhance the security of your school?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

13. Do you think the presence of security guards reduces/  
would reduce violence in schools?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

14. Do you think that having security guards search for  
weapons reduces/would reduce violence in schools?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

15. Do you think that having security guards search for  
drugs reduces/would reduce violence in schools?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

16. Are there metal detectors in your school?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

17. Do you think metal detectors find all metal objects  
that are brought into schools?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

18. Do you think the presence of metal detectors enhances/  
would enhance your feeling of security in your school?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

19. Do you think metal detectors reduce/would reduce  
violence in schools?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

20. Do you think the presence of metal detectors makes/  
would make you feel safe in your school?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

21. Do you think gangs are present in schools?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

22. Do you think gangs account for violence in schools?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

23. Do you think gangs reduce/would reduce the discipline in your school?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

24. Do you think that students participate in school violence because of their families' income?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

25. Do you think students from higher income homes tend to participate in school violence more than students from lower income homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

26. Do you think students from lower income homes tend to participate in school violence more than students from higher income homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

27. Do you think students from lower income homes are more likely to participate in gang activities than students from higher income homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

28. Do you think students from higher income homes are more likely to participate in gang activities than students from lower income homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4



29. Do you think mass media products (i.e., television, music, videos, and video games) have an impact on school violence?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

30. Do you think the mass media (i.e., television, videos, video games, and music) influence student behaviors?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

31. Do you think media products accurately reflect school values?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

32. Do you think students who watch violent television programs are more likely to commit violent acts than students who do not watch violent television programs?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

33. Do you think students who listen to music that promotes violence are more likely to commit violent acts than students who do not listen to music that promotes violence?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

34. Do you think students who play video games involving violence are more likely to commit violent acts than students who do not play violent video games?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

35. Do you think students who live in single parent homes are more likely to participate in school violence than students who live in two parent homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

36. Do you think students who live in two parent homes are more likely to participate in school violence than students who live in single parent homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

37. Do you think students who live with one parent in the home are more likely to participate in gang activities?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

38. Do you think students who live with two parents in the home are more likely to participate in gang activities?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

39. Do you think students from higher income homes are more likely to participate in peer mediation programs than students from lower income homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

40. Do you think students from lower income homes are more likely to participate in peer mediation programs than students from higher income homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

41. Do you think students from single parent homes are more likely to participate in peer mediation programs than students from two parent homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

42. Do you think students from two parent homes are more likely to participate in peer mediation programs than students from single parent homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

43. Do you think students from single parent homes are more likely to participate in conflict resolution programs than students from two parent homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

44. Do you think students from two parent homes are more likely to participate in conflict resolution programs than students from single parent homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

45. Do you think conflict resolution programs are successful in reducing gang violence?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

46. Do you think anti-violence programs are successful in reducing school crimes committed by students with low socio-economic status?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

47. Do you think anti-violence programs are successful in reducing school crimes committed by students with higher income homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

48. Do you think anti-violence programs are successful in reducing school crimes committed by students with lower income homes?

Never	Sometimes	Often	Always
1	2	3	4

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